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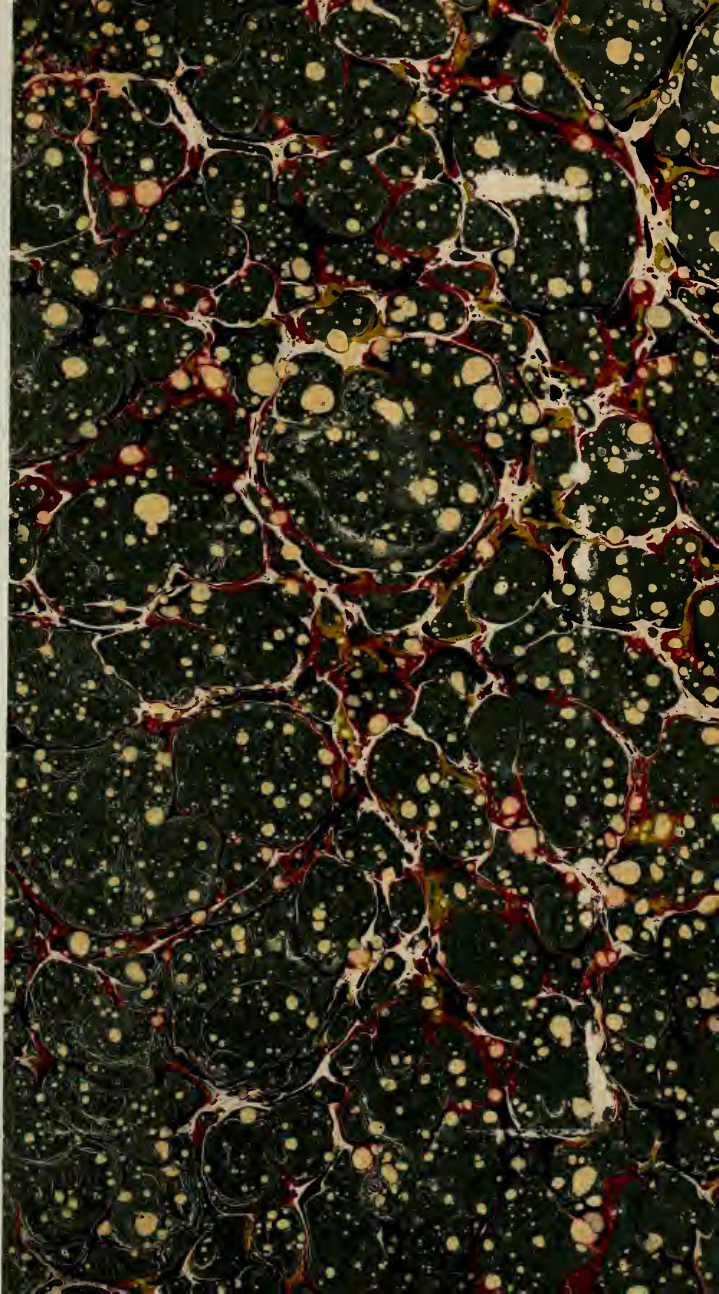


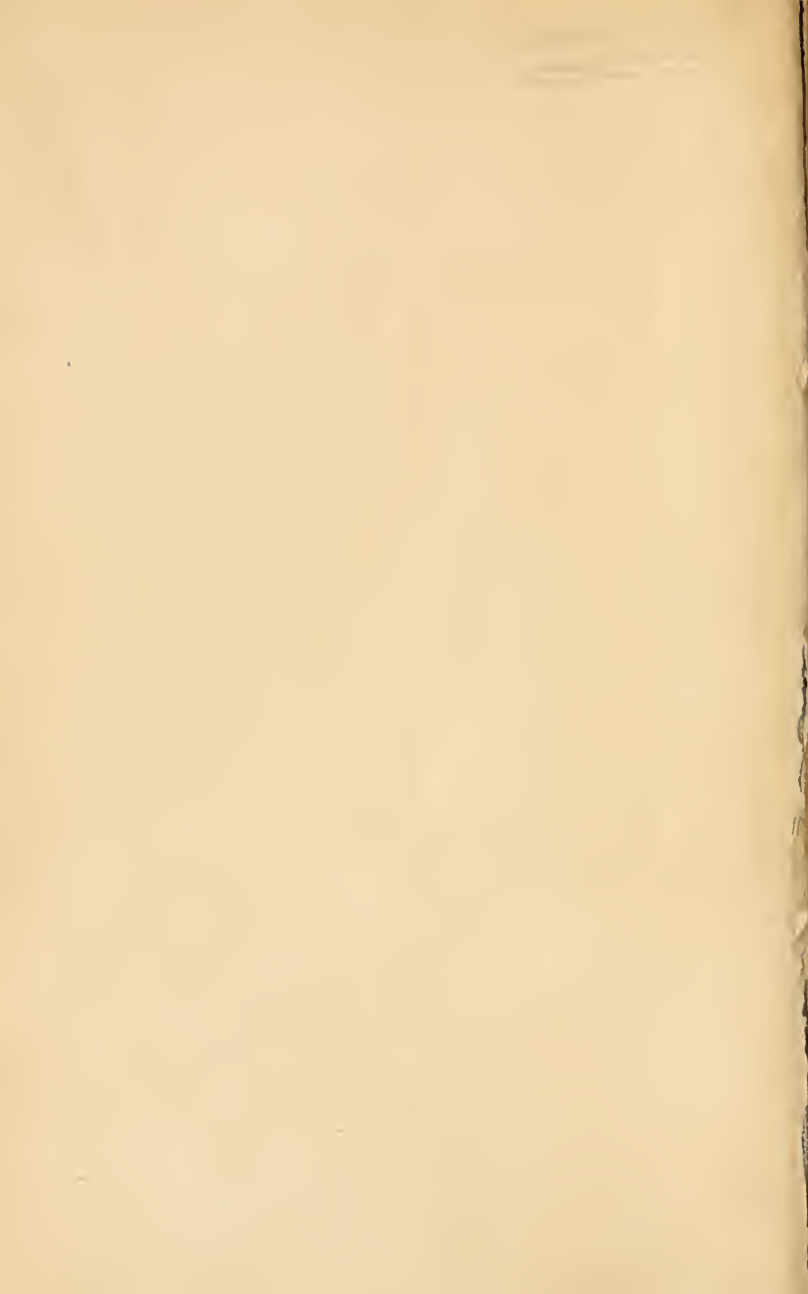


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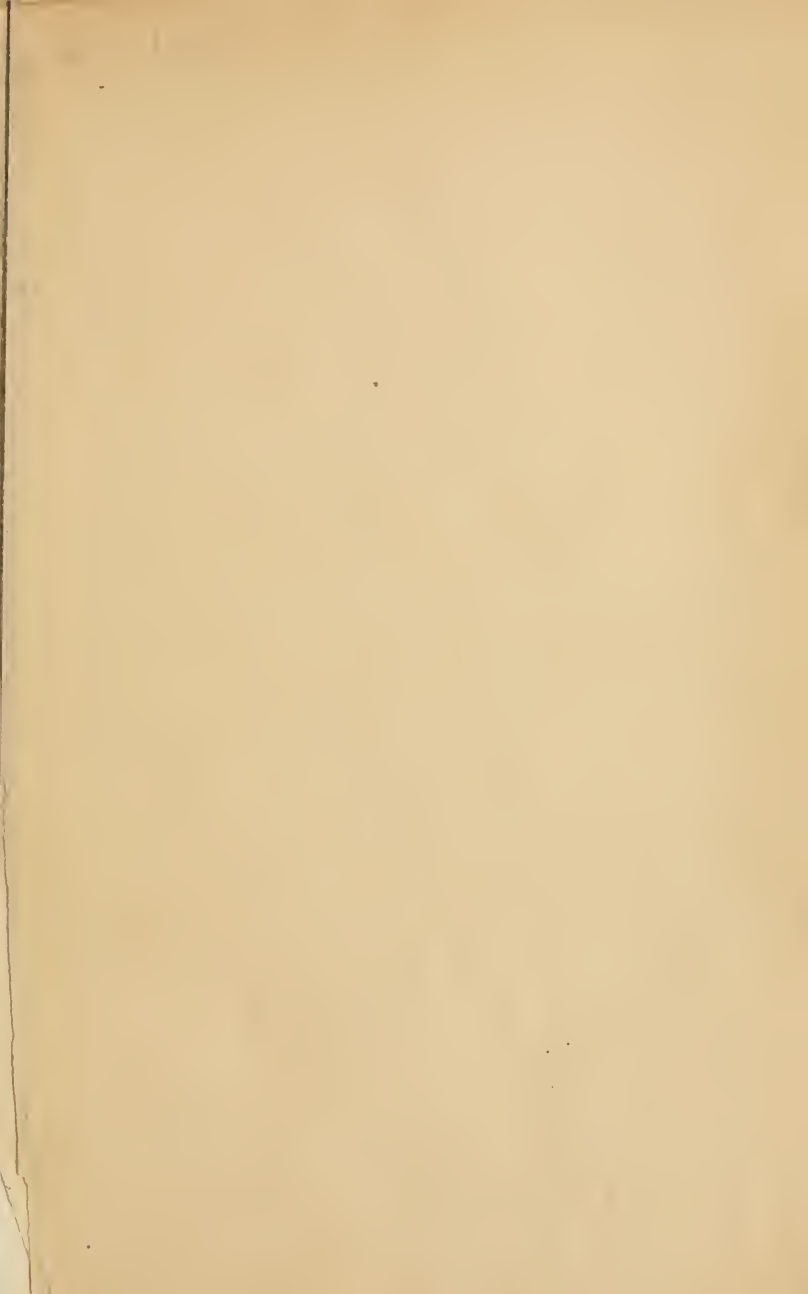
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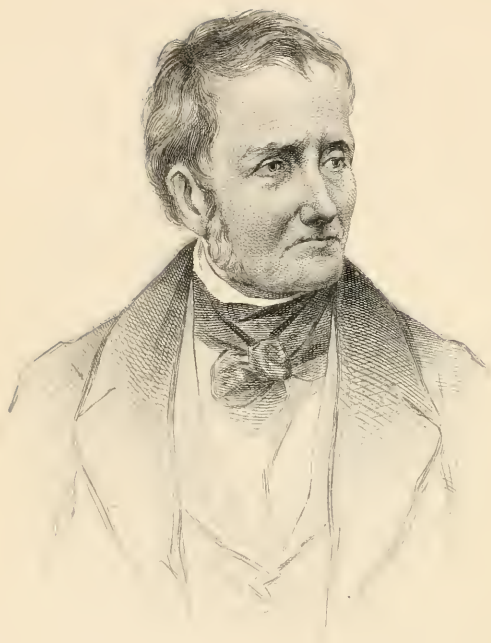
*RIVERSIDE EDITION.*

VOLUME I.









Very truly yours,  
Thomas Dr Lincey.

P. 26. 2

CONFESSIONS  
OF AN  
ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER,  
AND KINDRED PAPERS.

BY  
THOMAS DE QUINCEY.



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## PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present edition is a reissue of the Works of Thomas De Quincey. The series is based upon the American Edition of De Quincey's Works, published originally in twenty-two volumes. After that edition was issued, a complete English edition was published in Edinburgh and was edited and revised in part by the author. This edition contained changes and additions, and the opportunity has been taken, in reissuing the American edition, to incorporate the new material which appeared in the English edition. At the same time, the arrangement of the several productions is more systematic and orderly than was possible when the collection was first made, at different intervals, under difficulties which render the work of the first editor especially praiseworthy. In the final volume, an introduction to the series sets forth the plan carried out in this new arrangement, and that volume also contains a very full index to the entire series. Throughout the series, the notes of the editor are distinguished from those of the author by being inclosed in brackets [ ].

FROM THE AUTHOR, TO THE AMERICAN EDITOR  
OF HIS WORKS. \*

THESE papers I am anxious to put into the hands of your house, and, so far as regards the U. S., of *your* house exclusively; not with any view to further emolument, but as an acknowledgment of the services which you have already rendered me: namely, first, in having brought together so widely scattered a collection,—a difficulty which in my own hands by too painful an experience I had found from nervous depression to be absolutely insurmountable; secondly, in having made me a participator in the pecuniary profits of the American edition, without solicitation or the shadow of any expectation on my part, without any legal claim that I could plead, or equitable warrant in established usage, solely and merely upon your own spontaneous motion. Some of these new papers, I hope, will not be without their value in the eyes of those who have taken an interest in the original series. But at all events, good or bad, they are now tendered to the appropriation of your individual house, the MESSRS. TICKNOR AND FIELDS, according to the amplest extent of any power to make such a transfer that I may be found to possess by law or custom in America.

I wish this transfer were likely to be of more value. But the veriest trifle, interpreted by the spirit in which I offer it, may express my sense of the liberality manifested throughout this transaction by your honorable house.

Ever believe me, my dear sir,

Your faithful and obliged,

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

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## FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

I HERE present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period of my life; according to my application of it, I trust that it will prove, not merely an interesting record, but, in a considerable degree, useful and instructive. In *that* hope it is that I have drawn it up; and *that* must be my apology for breaking through that delicate and honorable reserve, which, for the most part, restrains us from the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities. Nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers, or scars, and tearing away that "decent drapery" which time, or indulgence to human frailty, may have drawn over them: accordingly, the greater part of *our* confessions (that is, spontaneous and extra-judicial confes-

sions) proceed from demireps, adventurers, or swindlers; and for any such acts of gratuitous self-humiliation from those who can be supposed in sympathy with the decent and self-respecting part of society, we must look to French literature, or to that part of the German which is tainted with the spurious and defective sensibility of the French. All this I feel so forcibly, and so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this, or any part of my narrative, to come before the public eye, until after my death (when, for many reasons, the whole will be published): and it is not without an anxious review of the reasons for and against this step, that I have, at last, concluded on taking it.

Guilt and misery shrink, by a natural instinct, from public notice: they court privacy and solitude; and, even in the choice of a grave, will sometimes sequester themselves from the general population of the church-yard, as if declining to claim fellowship with the great family of man, and wishing (in the affecting language of Mr. Wordsworth)

— Humbly to express  
A penitential loneliness.

**It is well, upon the whole, and for the interest of us**

all, that it should be so; nor would I willingly, in my own person, manifest a disregard of such salutary feelings; nor in act or word do anything to weaken them. But, on the one hand, as my self-accusation does not amount to a confession of guilt, so, on the other, it is possible that, if it did, the benefit resulting to others, from the record of an experience purchased at so heavy a price, might compensate, by a vast over-balance, for any violence done to the feelings I have noticed, and justify a breach of the general rule. Infirmity and misery do not, of necessity, imply guilt. They approach, or recede from, the shades of that dark alliance, in proportion to the probable motives and prospects of the offender, and the palliations, known or secret, of the offence; in proportion as the temptations to it were potent from the first, and the resistance to it, in act or in effort, was earnest to the last. For my own part, without breach of truth or modesty, I may affirm, that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher: from my birth I was made an intellectual creature; and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my school-boy days. If opium-eating be a sensual pleasure, and if I am bound to confess that I have indulged

in it to an excess, not yet *recorded*\* of any other man, - it is no less true, that I have struggled against this fascinating enthrallment with a religious zeal, and have at length accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man — have untwisted, almost to its final links, the accursed chain which fettered me. Such a self-conquest may reasonably be set off in counterbalance to any kind or degree of self-indulgence. Not to insist that, in my case, the self-conquest was unquestionable, the self-indulgence open to doubts of casuistry, according as that name shall be extended to acts aiming at the bare relief of pain, or shall be restricted to such as aim at the excitement of positive pleasure.

Guilt, therefore, I do not acknowledge; and, if I did, it is possible that I might still resolve on the present act of confession, in consideration of the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters. But who are they? Reader, I am sorry to say, a very numerous class indeed. Of this I became convinced, some years ago, by computing, at that time, the number of those in one small class of English society (the class of men

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\* “Not yet *recorded*,” I say; for there is one celebrated man of the present day, who, if all be true which is reported of him, has greatly exceeded me in quantity.

distinguished for talent, or of eminent station) who were known to me, directly or indirectly, as opium-eaters; such, for instance, as the eloquent and benevolent ——;<sup>1</sup> the late Dean of ——;<sup>2</sup> Lord ——; Mr. ——, the philosopher;<sup>3</sup> a late under-secretary of state (who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium, in the very same words as the Dean of ——, namely, “that he felt as though rats were gnawing and abrading the coats of his stomach”); Mr. ——; and many others, hardly less known, whom it would be tedious to mention. Now, if one class, comparatively so limited, could furnish so many scores of cases (and that within the knowledge of one single inquirer), it was a natural inference, that the entire population of England would furnish a proportionable number. The soundness of this inference, however, I doubted, until some facts became known to me, which satisfied me that it was not incorrect. I will mention two: 1. Three respectable London druggists, in widely remote quarters of London, from whom I happened lately to be purchasing small quantities of opium, assured me that the number of *amateur* opium-eaters (as I may term them) was, at this time, immense; and that the difficulty of distinguishing these persons, to whom habit had rendered opium necessary,

from such as were purchasing it with a view to suicide, occasioned them daily trouble and disputes. This evidence respected London only. But, 2 (which will possibly surprise the reader more), some years ago, on passing through Manchester, I was informed by several cotton manufacturers that their work-people were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating; so much so, that on a Saturday afternoon the counters of the druggists were strewed with pills of one, two, or three grains, in preparation for the known demand of the evening. The immediate occasion of this practice was the lowness of wages, which, at that time, would not allow them to indulge in ale or spirits; and, wages rising, it may be thought that this practice would cease: but, as I do not readily believe that any man, having once tasted the divine luxuries of opium, will afterwards descend to the gross and mortal enjoyments of alcohol, I take it for granted

That those eat now who never ate before ;  
And those who always ate now eat the more.

Indeed, the fascinating powers of opium are admitted, even by medical writers who are its greatest enemies: thus, for instance, Awsiter apothecary to Greenwich Hospital, in his "Essay



on the Effects of Opium" (published in the year 1763), when attempting to explain why Mead had not been sufficiently explicit on the properties, counter-agents, &c., of this drug, expresses himself in the following mysterious terms (*φοροντία συνετοισι*): "Perhaps he thought the subject of too delicate a nature to be made common; and as many people might then indiscriminately use it, it would take from that necessary fear and caution, which should prevent their experiencing the extensive power of this drug; *for there are many properties in it, if universally known, that would habituate the use, and make it more in request with us than the Turks themselves*; the result of which knowledge," he adds, "must prove a general misfortune." In the necessity of this conclusion I do not altogether concur; but upon that point I shall have occasion to speak at the close of my Confessions, where I shall present the reader with the *moral* of my narrative.<sup>4</sup>



## PRELIMINARY CONFESSIONS.

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THESE preliminary confessions, or introductory narrative of the youthful adventures which laid the foundation of the writer's habit of opium-eating in after life, it has been judged proper to premise, for three several reasons :

1. As forestalling that question, and giving it a satisfactory answer, which else would painfully obtrude itself in the course of the Opium Confessions — “How came any reasonable being to subject himself to such a yoke of misery, voluntarily to incur a captivity so servile, and knowingly to fetter himself with such a seven-fold chain? —” a question which, if not somewhere plausibly resolved, could hardly fail, by the indignation which it would be apt to raise as against an act of wanton folly, to interfere with that degree of sympathy which is necessary in any case to an author's purposes.

2. As furnishing a key to some parts of that tremendous scenery which afterwards peopled the dreams of the opium-eater.

3. As creating some previous interest of a personal sort in the confessing subject, apart from the matter of the confessions, which cannot fail to render the

confessions themselves more interesting. If a man "whose talk is of oxen" should become an opium-eater, the probability is, that (if he is not too dull to dream at all) he will dream about oxen: whereas, in the case before him, the reader will find that the opium-eater boasteth himself to be a philosopher; and accordingly, that the phantasmagoria of *his* dreams (waking or sleeping, day dreams or night dreams) is suitable to one who, in that character,

Humani nihil a se alienum putat.

For amongst the conditions which he deems indispensable to the sustaining of any claim to the title of philosopher, is not merely the possession of a superb intellect in its *analytic* functions (in which part of the pretension, however, England can for some generations show but few claimants; at least, he is not aware of any known candidate for this honor who can be styled emphatically *a subtle thinker*, with the exception of *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, and, in a narrower department of thought with the recent illustrious exception \*

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\* A third exception might perhaps have been added: and my reason for not adding that exception is chiefly because it was only in his juvenile efforts that the writer whom I allude to expressly addressed himself to philosophical themes; his riper powers have been dedicated (on very excusable and very intelligible grounds, under the present direction of the popular mind in England) to criticism and the fine arts. This reason apart, however, I doubt whether he is not rather to be considered an acute thinker than a subtle one. It is, besides, a great drawback on his mastery over philosophical subjects, that he has obviously not had the advantage of a regular scholastic education: he has not read Plato in his youth (which most likely was only his misfortune), but neither has he read Kant in his manhood (which is his fault)

of *David Ricardo*),—but also on such a constitution of the *moral* faculties as shall give him an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and mysteries of human nature: that constitution of faculties, in short, which (amongst all the generations of men that from the beginning of time have deployed into life, as it were, upon this planet) our English poets have possessed in the highest degree — and Scottish\* professors in the lowest.

I have often been asked how I first came to be a regular opium-eater; and have suffered, very unjustly, in the opinion of my acquaintance, from being reputed to have brought upon myself all the sufferings which I shall have to record, by a long course of indulgence in this practice, purely for the sake of creating an artificial state of pleasurable excitement. This, however, is a misrepresentation of my case. True it is, that for nearly ten years I did occasionally take opium, for the sake of the exquisite pleasure it gave me; but, so long as I took it with this view, I was effectually protected from all material bad consequences, by the necessity of interposing long intervals between the several acts of indulgence, in order to renew the pleasurable sensations. It was not for the purpose of creating pleasure, but of mitigating pain in the severest degree, that I first began to use opium as an article of daily diet. In the twenty-eighth year of my age, a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had first experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had originally been caused by the extrem.

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\* I disclaim any allusion to existing professors, of whom indeed, I know only one.

eties of hunger, suffered in my boyish days. During the season of hope and redundant happiness which succeeded (that is, from eighteen to twenty-four) it had slumbered: for the three following years it had revived at intervals; and now, under unfavorable circumstances, from depression of spirits, it attacked me with violence that yielded to no remedies but opium. As the youthful sufferings which first produced this derangement of the stomach were interesting in themselves and in the circumstances that attended them, I shall here briefly retrace them.

My father died when I was about seven years old, and left me to the care of four guardians.<sup>5</sup> I was sent to various schools, great and small; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but would converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore*; for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, &c., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, &c. “That boy,” said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, “that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English

me." He who honored me with this eulogy was a scholar, "and a ripe and good one," and, of all my tutors, was the only one whom I loved or revered. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation), I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead, who was in a perpetual panic lest I should expose his ignorance; and, finally, to that of a respectable scholar, at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation. This man had been appointed to his situation by — College, Oxford; and was a sound, well-built scholar, but (like most men whom I have known from that college) coarse, clumsy, and inelegant. A miserable contrast he presented, in my eyes, to the Etonian brilliancy of my favorite master; and, besides, he could not disguise from my hourly notice the poverty and meagreness of his understanding. It is a bad thing for a boy to be, and know himself, far beyond his tutors, whether in knowledge or in power of mind. This was the case, so far as regarded knowledge at least, not with myself only; for the two boys who jointly with myself composed the first form were better Grecians than the head-master, though not more elegant scholars, nor at all more accustomed to sacrifice to the graces. When I first entered, I remember that we read Sophocles; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our "Archididas-ealus" (as he loved to be called) conning our lesson before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting (as it were) any difficulties he found in the choruses whilst *we* never condescended to open our books, unti

the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams upon his wig, or some such important matter. My two class-fellows were poor, and dependent, for their future prospects at the university, on the recommendation of the head-master; but I, who had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college, wished to be sent thither immediately. I made earnest representations on the subject to my guardians, but all to no purpose. One, who was more reasonable, and had more knowledge of the world than the rest, lived at a distance; two of the other three resigned all their authority into the hands of the fourth; and this fourth, with whom I had to negotiate, was a worthy man, in his way, but haughty, obstinate, and intolerant of all opposition to his will. After a certain number of letters and personal interviews, I found that I had nothing to hope for, not even a compromise of the matter, from my guardian: unconditional submission was what he demanded; and I prepared myself, therefore, for other measures. Summer was now coming on with hasty steps, and my seventeenth birth-day was fast approaching; after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered amongst school-boys.<sup>6</sup> Money being what I chiefly wanted, I wrote to a woman of high rank,<sup>7</sup> who, though young herself, had known me from a child, and had latterly treated me with great distinction, requesting that she would "lend" me five guineas. For upwards of a week no answer came; and I was beginning to despond, when, at length, a servant put into my hands a double letter, with a coronet on the seal. The letter was kind and obliging



the fair writer was on the sea-coast, and in that way the delay had arisen, she enclosed double of what I had asked, and good-naturedly hinted, that if I should *never* repay her, it would not absolutely ruin her. Now then, I was prepared for my scheme: ten guineas, added to about two that I had remaining from my pocket money, seemed to me sufficient for an indefinite length of time; and at that happy age, if no *definite* boundary can be assigned to one's power, the spirit of hope and pleasure makes it virtually infinite.

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's (and, what cannot often be said of his remarks, it is a very feeling one) that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing), without sadness of heart. This truth I felt deeply when I came to leave —, a place which I did not love, and where I had not been happy. On the evening before I left — forever, I grieved when the ancient and lofty school-room resounded with the evening service, performed for the last time in my hearing; and at night, when the muster-roll of names was called over, and mine (as usual) was called first. I stepped forward, and passing the head-master, who was standing by, I bowed to him, and looking earnestly in his face, thinking to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right; I never *did* see him again, nor never shall. He looked at me complacently, smiled good-naturedly, returned my salutation (or rather my valediction), and we parted (though he knew it not) forever. I could not reverence him intellectually; but he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me many indul

gences; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came, which was to launch me into the world, and from which my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its coloring. I lodged in the head-master's house, and had been allowed, from my first entrance, the indulgence of a private room, which I used both as a sleeping room and as a study. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient towers of —, "drest in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the radiant lustre of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immovable in my purpose, but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles; and if I could have foreseen the hurricane, and perfect hail-storm of affliction, which soon fell upon me, well might I have been agitated. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight: and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong, as that of noon-day at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad; and thus, the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep, only so long as the presence of man, and his restless and unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For the last year and a half this room had been my "pensive citadel:" here I had read and studied through all the hours of night; and, though true it was

that, for the latter part of this time, I, who was framed for love and gentle affections, had lost my gayety and happiness, during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy so passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. I wept as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is eighteen years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see distinctly, as if it were but yesterday, the lineaments and expressions of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze: it was a picture of the lovely —, which hung over the mantel-piece; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with benignity and divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of — clock proclaimed that it was four o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, and then gently walked out, and closed the door forever!

\* \* \* \* \*

So blended and intertwined in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears, that I cannot yet recall, without smiling, an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's. My room was at an aerial elevation in the house, and

(what was worse) the staircase which communicated with this angle of the building was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head-master's chamber-door. I was a favorite with all the servants; and knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom swore he would do anything I wished; and, when the time arrived, went up stairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man: however, the groom was a man

Of Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear  
The weight of mightiest monarchies;

and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plains. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with slow and firm steps; but, unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery his foot slipped; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bed-room door of the archididascalus. My first thought was, that all was lost: and that my only chance for executing a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and on mine: but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous, in this unhappy *contretems*, taken possession

of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the Seven Sleepers. At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not forbear joining in it; subdued to this, not so much by the unhappy *etourderie* of the trunk, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Dr. — would sally out of his room; for, in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had ceased, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bed-room. Dr. — had a painful complaint, which sometimes keeping him awake, made him sleep, perhaps, when it did come, the deeper. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carrier's: then, "with Providence my guide," I set off on foot, carrying a small parcel, with some articles of dress under my arm: a favorite English poet in one pocket; and a small 12mo volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other.

It had been my intention, originally, to proceed to Westmoreland, both from the love I bore to that county, and on other personal accounts. Accident, however gave a different direction to my wanderings, and I bent my steps towards North Wales.<sup>8</sup>

After wandering about for some time in Denbighshire, Merionethshire, and Caernarvonshire, I took lodgings in a small neat house in B——.<sup>9</sup> Here I might

nave staid with great comfort for many weeks; for provisions were cheap at B——, from the scarcity of other markets for the surplus products of a wide agricultural district. An accident, however, in which, perhaps, no offence was designed, drove me out to wander again. I know not whether my reader may have remarked, but I have often remarked, that the proudest class of people in England (or, at any rate the class whose pride is most apparent) are the families of bishops. Noblemen, and their children, carry about with them, in their very titles, a sufficient notification of their rank. Nay, their very names (and this applies also to the children of many untitled houses) are often, to the English ear, adequate exponents of high birth, or descent. Sackville, Manners, Fitzroy, Paulet, Cavendish, and scores of others, tell their own tale. Such persons, therefore, find everywhere a due sense of their claims already established, except among those who are ignorant of the world, by virtue of their own obscurity; "Not to know *them* argues one's self unknown." Their manners take a suitable tone and coloring; and, for once that they find it necessary to impress a sense of their consequence upon others, they meet with a thousand occasions for moderating and tempering this sense by acts of courteous condescension. With the families of bishops it is otherwise; with them it is all up-hill work to make known their pretensions; for the proportion of the episcopal bench taken from noble families is not at any time very large; and the succession to these dignities is so rapid, that the public ear seldom has time to become familiar with them unless where they are connected with some literary



reputation. Hence it is that the children of bishops carry about with them an austere and repulsive air, indicative of claims not generally acknowledged, — a sort of *noli te tangere* manner, nervously apprehensive of too familiar approach, and shrinking with the sensitiveness of a gouty man, from all contact with the *οἱ πολλοί*. Doubtless, a powerful understanding, or unusual goodness of nature, will preserve a man from such weakness; but, in general, the truth of my representation will be acknowledged; pride, if not of deeper root in such families, appears, at least, more upon the surface of their manners. This spirit of manners naturally communicates itself to their domestics, and other dependants. Now, my landlady had been a lady's maid, or a nurse in the family of the Bishop of —; and had but lately married away and "settled" (as such people express it) for life. In a little town like B——, merely to have lived in the bishop's family conferred some distinction; and my good landlady had rather more than her share of the pride I have noticed on that score. What "my lord" said, and what "my lord" did, — how useful he was in parliament, and how indispensable at Oxford, — formed the daily burden of her talk. All this I bore very well; for I was too good-natured to laugh in anybody's face, and I could make an ample allowance for the garrulity of an old servant. Of necessity, however, I must have appeared in her eyes very inadequately impressed with the bishop's importance; and, perhaps to punish me for my indifference, or, possibly, by accident, she one day repeated to me a conversation in which I was indirectly a party concerned. She had been to the palace to pay her respects to the famil, ;

and, dinner being over, was summoned into the dining-room. In giving an account of her household economy she happened to mention that she had let her apartments. Thereupon the good bishop (it seemed) had taken occasion to caution her as to her selection of inmates; "for," said he, "you must recollect, Betty, that this place is in the high road to the Head; so that multitudes of Irish swindlers, running away from their debts into England, and of English swindlers, running away from their debts to the Isle of Man, are likely to take this place in their route." This advice was certainly not without reasonable grounds, but rather fitted to be stored up for Mrs. Betty's private meditations, than specially reported to me. What followed, however, was somewhat worse:—"O, my lord," answered my landlady (according to her own representation of the matter), "I really don't think this young gentleman is a swindler; because ——." "You don't *think* me a swindler?" said I, interrupting her, in a tumult of indignation; "for the future, I shall spare you the trouble of thinking about it." And without delay I prepared for my departure. Some concessions the good woman seemed disposed to make; but a harsh and contemptuous expression, which I fear that I applied to the learned dignitary himself, roused *her* indignation in turn; and reconciliation then became impossible. I was, indeed, greatly irritated at the bishop's having suggested any grounds of suspicion, however remotely, against a person whom he had never seen; and I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek; which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption that I was no swindler would also (I hoped) compel the bishop to



reply in the same language; in which case, I doubted not to make it appear, that if I was not so rich as his lordship, I was a far better Grecian. Calmer thoughts, however, drove this boyish design out of my mind: for I considered that the bishop was in the right to counsel an old servant; that he could not have designed that his advice should be reported to me; and that the same coarseness of mind which had led Mrs. Betty to repeat the advice at all might have colored it in a way more agreeable to her own style of thinking than to the actual expressions of the worthy bishop.

I left the lodging the very same hour;<sup>10</sup> and this turned out a very unfortunate occurrence for me, because, living henceforward at inns, I was drained of my money very rapidly. In a fortnight I was reduced to short allowance; that is, I could allow myself only one meal a day. From the keen appetite produced by constant exercise and mountain air, acting on a youthful stomach, I soon began to suffer greatly on this slender regimen; for the single meal which I could venture to order was coffee or tea. Even this, however, was at length withdrawn; and, afterwards, so long as I remained in Wales, I subsisted either on blackberries, hips, haws, &c., or on the casual hospitalities which I now and then received, in return for such little services as I had an opportunity of rendering. Sometimes I wrote letters of business for cottagers who happened to have relatives in Liverpool or in London; more often I wrote love-letters to their sweethearts for young women who had lived as servants in Shrewsbury, or other towns on the English border. On all such occasions I gave great satisfaction to my humble friends, and was generally treated with

hospitality; and once in particular, near the village of Llan-y-styndwr (or some such name), in a sequestered part of Merionethshire, I was entertained for upwards of three days by a family of young people, with an affectionate and fraternal kindness that left an impression upon my heart not yet impaired. The family consisted, at that time, of four sisters and three brothers, all grown up, and remarkable for elegance and delicacy of manners. So much beauty, and so much native good breeding and refinement, I do not remember to have seen before or since in any cottage, except once or twice in Westmoreland and Devonshire. They spoke English; an accomplishment not often met with in so many members of one family, especially in villages remote from the high road. Here I wrote, on my first introduction, a letter about prize-money, for one of the brothers, who had served on board an English man-of-war; and, more privately, two love-letters for two of the sisters. They were both interesting looking girls, and one of uncommon loveliness. In the midst of their confusion and blushes, whilst dictating, or rather giving me general instructions, it did not require any great penetration to discover that what they wished was that their letters should be as kind as was consistent with proper maidenly pride. I contrived so to temper my expressions as to reconcile the gratification of both feelings; and they were much pleased with the way in which I had expressed their thoughts, as (in their simplicity) they were astonished at my having so readily discovered them. The reception one meets with from the women of a family generally determines the tenor of one's whole entertainment. In this case I had dis-

charged my confidential duties as secretary so much to the general satisfaction, perhaps also amusing them with my conversation, that I was pressed to stay with a cordiality which I had little inclination to resist. I slept with the brothers, the only unoccupied bed standing in the apartment of the young women: but in all other points they treated me with a respect not usually paid to purses as light as mine; as if my scholarship were sufficient evidence that I was of "gentle blood." Thus I lived with them for three days, and great part of a fourth; and, from the undiminished kindness which they continued to show me, I believe I might have staid with them up to this time, if their power had corresponded with their wishes. On the last morning, however, I perceived upon their countenances, as they sate at breakfast, the expression of some unpleasant communication which was at hand; and soon after, one of the brothers explained to me, that their parents had gone, the day before my arrival, to an annual meeting of Methodists, held at Caernarvon, and were that day expected to return; "and if they should not be so civil as they ought to be," he begged, on the part of all the young people, that I would not take it amiss. The parents returned with churlish faces, and "*Dym Sasenach*" (*no English*) in answer to all my addresses. I saw how matters stood; and so, taking an affectionate leave of my kind and interesting young hosts, I went my way. For, though they spoke warmly to their parents in my behalf, and often excused the manner of the old people, by saying that it was "only their way," yet I easily understood that my talent for writing love-letters would do as little to recommend me with twa

grave sexagenarian Welsh Methodists as my Greek Sapphics or Alcaics; and what had been hospitality when offered to me with the gracious courtesy of my young friends, would become charity, when connected with the harsh demeanor of these old people. Certainly, Mr. Shelley is right in his notions about old age; unless powerfully counteracted by all sorts of opposite agencies, it is a miserable corrupter and blighter to the genial charities of the human heart.

Soon after this, I contrived, by means which I must omit for want of room, to transfer myself to London.<sup>11</sup> And now began the latter and fiercer stage of my long sufferings; without using a disproportionate expression, I might say, of my agony. For I now suffered, for upwards of sixteen weeks, the physical anguish of hunger in various degrees of intensity; but as bitter, perhaps, as ever any human being can have suffered who has survived it. I would not needlessly harass my reader's feelings by a detail of all that I endured; for extremities such as these, under any circumstances of heaviest misconduct or guilt, cannot be contemplated, even in description, without a rueful pity that is painful to the natural goodness of the human heart. Let it suffice, at least on this occasion, to say, that a few fragments of bread from the breakfast-table of one individual (who supposed me to be ill, but did not know of my being in utter want), and these at uncertain intervals, constituted my whole support. During the former part of my sufferings (that is, generally in Wales, and always for the first two months in London), I was houseless, and very seldom slept under a roof. To this constant exposure to the open air I ascribe it

mainly, that I did not sink under my torments. Latterly however, when cold and more inclement weather came on, and when, from the length of my sufferings, I had begun to sink into a more languishing condition, it was, no doubt, fortunate for me, that the same person to whose breakfast-table I had access allowed me to sleep in a large, unoccupied house, of which he was tenant. Unoccupied, I call it, for there was no household or establishment in it; nor any furniture, indeed, except a table and a few chairs. But I found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate, a poor, friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned, that she had slept and lived there alone, for some time before I came; and great joy the poor creature expressed, when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house was large; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious echoing on the spacious staircase and hall; and, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold, and, I fear, hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more (it appeared) from the self-created one of ghosts. I promised her protection against all ghosts whatsoever; but, alas! I could offer her no other assistance. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of cursed law papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a sort of large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered, in a garret, an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our warmth. The

poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not; for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching; for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have to describe hereafter as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep*; so that I could hear myself moaning, and was often, as it seemed to me, awakened suddenly by my own voice; and, about this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me, at different periods of my life, namely, a sort of twitching (I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion; and, from increasing weakness (as I said before), I was constantly falling asleep, and constantly awaking. Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock; sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of bailiffs; improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London; and I observed that he never failed to examine, through a private window, the appearance of those who knocked at the door, before he would

allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *material*, which, for the most part, was little more than a roll, or a few biscuits, which he had bought on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party, as I once learnedly and facetiously observed to him, the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sate* in any relation whatever) of succession, as the metaphysicians have it, and not of coëxistence; in the relation of parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast, I generally contrived a reason for lounging in; and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as he had left,—sometimes, indeed, there were none at all. In doing this, I committed no robbery, except upon the man himself, who was thus obliged (I believe), now and then, to send out at noon for an extra biscuit; for, as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law writings, &c.); that room was to her the Blue-beard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the night. Whether this child was an illegitimate daughter of Mr. —, <sup>12</sup> or only a servant, I could not ascertain; she did not herself know; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. — make his appearance, than she went below stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, &c.; and, except when she was summoned to run an errand. she never emerged



from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchens, to the upper air, until my welcome knock at night called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night; for, as soon as the hours of business commenced, I saw that my absence would be acceptable; and, in general, therefore, I went off and sate in the parks, or elsewhere, until night-fall.

But who, and what, meantime, was the master of the house, himself? Reader, he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law, who, — what shall I say? — who, on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all the indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience (a periphrasis which might be abridged considerably, but *that* I leave to the reader's taste); in many walks of life, a conscience is a more expensive incumbrance than a wife or a carriage; and just as people talk of "laying down" their carriages, so I suppose my friend, Mr. —, had "laid down" his conscience for a time; meaning, doubtless, to resume it as soon as he could afford it. The inner economy of such a man's daily life would present a most strange picture, if I could allow myself to amuse the reader at his expense. Even with my limited opportunities for observing what went on, I saw many scenes of London intrigues, and complex chicanery, 'cycle and epicycle, orb in orb,' at which I sometimes smile to this day, and at which I smiled then, in spite of my misery. My situation, however, at that time, gave me little experience, in my own person, of any qualities in Mr. —'s character but such as did him



honor; and of his whole strange composition, I must forget everything but that towards me he was obliging, and, to the extent of his power, generous.

That power was not, indeed, very extensive. However, in common with the rats, I sate rent free; and as Dr. Johnson has recorded that he never but once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he could eat, so let me be grateful that, on that single occasion, I had as large a choice of apartments in a London mansion as I could possibly desire. Except the Blue-beard room, which the poor child believed to be haunted, all others, from the attics to the cellars, were at our service. "The world was all before us," and we pitched our tent for the night in any spot we chose. This house I have already described as a large one. It stands in a conspicuous situation, and in a well-known part of London.<sup>13</sup> Many of my readers will have passed it, I doubt not, within a few hours of reading this. For myself, I never fail to visit it when business draws me to London. About ten o'clock this very night, August 15, 1821, being my birth-day,<sup>14</sup> I turned aside from my evening walk, down Oxford-street, purposely to take a glance at it. It is now occupied by a respectable family, and, by the lights in the front drawing-room, I observed a domestic party, assembled, perhaps, at tea, and apparently cheerful and gay; — marvellous contrast, in my eyes, to the darkness, cold, silence, and desolation, of that same house eighteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar and a neglected child. Her, by the by, in after years, I vainly endeavored to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child. She

was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God even in those years I needed not the embellishments of novel accessories to conciliate my affections. Plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me; and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness. If she is now living, she is probably a mother, with children of her own; but, as I have said, I could never trace her.

This I regret; but another person there was, at that time, whom I have since sought to trace, with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who subsist upon the wages of prostitution. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing, that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. The reader needs neither smile at this avowal, nor frown; for, not to remind my classical readers of the old Latin proverb, "*Sine Cerere*," &c., it may well be supposed that in the existing state of my purse my connection with such women could not have been an impure one. But the truth is, that at no time of my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape. On the contrary, from my very earliest youth, it has been my pride to converse familiarly, *more Socratico*, with all human beings,—man, woman, and child,—that chance might fling in my way: a practice which is friendly to the knowledge of human nature, to good feelings, and to that frankness of address which becomes a man who would be thought a philosopher; for a philosopher

should not see with the eyes of the poor liminary creature calling himself a man of the world, and filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education, but should look upon himself as a catholic creature, and as standing in an equal relation to high and low, to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent. Being myself, at that time, of necessity, a peripatetic, or a walker of the streets, I naturally fell in, more frequently, with those female peripatetics, who are technically called street-walkers. Many of these women had occasionally taken my part against watchmen who wished to drive me off the steps of houses where I was sitting. But one amongst them, — the one on whose account I have at all introduced this subject, — yet no! let me not class thee, oh noble-minded Ann —, with that order of women; — let me find, if it be possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion — ministering to my necessities when all the world had forsaken me — I owe it that I am at this time alive. For many weeks, I had walked, at nights, with this poor friendless girl, up and down Oxford-street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticoes. She could not be so old as myself: she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. By such questions as my interest about her prompted, I had gradually drawn forth her simple history. Hers was a case of ordinary occurrence (as I have since had reason to think), and one in which, if London beneficence had better adapted its arrangements to meet it, the power of the law might oftener be interposed to protect and to avenge. But the stream of London

charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and under ground; — not obvious or readily accessible to poor, houseless wanderers; and it cannot be denied that the outside air and framework of London society is harsh, cruel, and repulsive. In any case, however, I saw that part of her injuries might easily have been redressed; and I urged her often and earnestly to lay her complaint before a magistrate. Friendless as she was, I assured her that she would meet with immediate attention; and that English justice, which was no respecter of persons, would speedily and amply avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property. She promised me often that she would; but she delayed taking the steps I pointed out, from time to time; for she was timid and dejected to a degree which showed how deeply sorrow had taken hold of her young heart; and perhaps she thought justly that the most upright judge and the most righteous tribunals could do nothing to repair her heaviest wrongs. Something, however, would perhaps have been done; for it had been settled between us, at length, — but, unhappily, on the very last time but one that I was ever to see her, — that in a day or two we should speak on her behalf. This little service it was destined, however, that I should never realize. Meantime, that which she rendered to me, and which was greater than I could ever have repaid her, was this: — One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford-street, and after a day when I had felt unusually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho-square. Thither we went; and we sat down on the steps of a house, which, to this hour

I never pass without a pang of grief, and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble act which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sate, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction of the liveliest kind, that without some powerful and reviving stimulus I should either have died on the spot, or should, at least, have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all reäscent, under my friendless circumstances, would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion, who had herself met with little but injuries in this world, stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay she ran off into Oxford-street, and in less time than could be imagined returned to me with a glass of portwine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach (which at that time would have rejected all solid food) with an instantaneous power of restoration; and for this glass the generous girl, without a murmur, paid out of her own humble purse, at a time, be it remembered, when she had scarcely wherewithal to purchase the bare necessaries of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her. O, youthful benefactress! how often, in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love, — how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfil-

ment, — even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative; might have power given to it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to overtake, to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation!

I do not often weep; for not only do my thoughts on subjects connected with the chief interests of man daily, nay, hourly, descend a thousand fathoms “too deep for tears;” not only does the sternness of my habits of thought present an antagonism to the feelings which prompt tears, — wanting, of necessity, to those who being protected usually by their levity from any tendency to meditative sorrow, would, by that same levity, be made incapable of resisting it on any casual access of such feelings; but also, I believe, that all minds which have contemplated such objects as deeply as I have done, must, for their own protection from utter despondency, have early encouraged and cherished some tranquillizing belief as to the future balances and the hieroglyphic meanings of human sufferings. On these accounts I am cheerful to this hour; and, as I have said, I do not often weep. Yet some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others; and often, when I walk, at this time, in Oxford-street, by dreamy lamp-light, and hear those airs played on a barrel-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear companion (as I must always call her), I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically sepa

rated us forever. How it happened, the reader will understand from what remains of this introductory narration.

Soon after the period of the last incident I have recorded, I met, in Albemarle-street, a gentleman of his late Majesty's household. This gentleman had received hospitalities, on different occasions, from my family; and he challenged me upon the strength of my family likeness. I did not attempt any disguise; I answered his questions ingenuously, and, on his pledging his word of honor that he would not betray me to my guardians, I gave him an address to my friend, the attorney. The next day I received from him a ten-pound bank note. The letter enclosing it was delivered, with other letters of business, to the attorney; but, though his look and manner informed me that he suspected its contents, he gave it up to me honorably and without demur.

This present, from the particular service to which it was applied, leads me naturally to speak of the purpose which had allured me up to London, and which I had been (to use a forensic word) *soliciting* from the first day of my arrival in London, to that of my final departure.

In so mighty a world as London, it will surprise my readers that I should not have found some means of staving off the last extremities of penury; and it will strike them that two resources, at least, must have been open to me, namely, either to seek assistance from the friends of my family, or to turn my youthful talents and attainments into some channel of pecuniary emolument. As to the first course, I may observe, generally



that what I dreaded beyond all other evils was the chance of being reclaimed by my guardians; not doubting that whatever power the law gave them would have been enforced against me to the utmost—that is, to the extremity of forcibly restoring me to the school which I had quitted; a restoration which, as it would, in my eyes, have been a dishonor, even if submitted to voluntarily, could not fail, when extorted from me in contempt and defiance of my own wishes and efforts, to have been a humiliation worse to me than death; and which would indeed have terminated in death. I was, therefore, shy enough of applying for assistance even in those quarters where I was sure of receiving it, at the risk of furnishing my guardians with any clue for recovering me. But, as to London in particular, though doubtless my father had in his lifetime had many friends there, yet (as ten years had passed since his death) I remembered few of them even by name; and never having seen London before, except once for a few hours, I knew not the address of even those few. To this mode of gaining help, therefore, in part the difficulty, but much more the paramount fear which I have mentioned, habitually indisposed me. In regard to the other mode, I now feel half inclined to join my reader in wondering that I should have overlooked it. As a corrector of Greek proofs (if in no other way), I might, doubtless, have gained enough for my slender wants. Such an office as this I could have discharged with an exemplary and punctual accuracy that would soon have gained me the confidence of my employers. But it must not be forgotten that even for such an office as this, it was necessary that I should



first of all have an introduction to some respectable publisher; and this I had no means of obtaining. To say the truth, however, it had never once occurred to me to think of literary labors as a source of profit. No mode sufficiently speedy of obtaining money had ever occurred to me, but that of borrowing it on the strength of my future claims and expectations. This mode I sought by every avenue to compass; and amongst other persons I applied to a Jew <sup>15</sup> named D——.\*

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\* To this same Jew, by the way, some eighteen months afterwards, I applied again on the same business; and, dating at that time from a respectable college, I was fortunate enough to gain his serious attention to my proposals. My necessities had not arisen from any extravagance, or youthful levities (these, my habits and the nature of my pleasures raised me far above), but simply from the vindictive malice of my guardian, who, when he found himself no longer able to prevent me from going to the university, had, as a parting token of his good nature, refused to sign an order for granting me a shilling beyond the allowance made to me at school, namely, one hundred pounds per annum. Upon this sum, it was, in my time, barely possible to have lived in college; and not possible to a man, who, though above the paltry affectation of ostentatious disregard for money, and without any expensive tastes, confided, nevertheless, rather too much in servants, and did not delight in the petty details of minute economy. I soon, therefore, became embarrassed; and, at length, after a most voluminous negotiation with the Jew (some parts of which, if I had leisure to rehearse them, would greatly amuse my readers), I was put in possession of the sum I asked for, on the "regular" terms of paying the Jew seventeen and a half per cent. by way of annuity on all the money furnished; Israel, on his part, graciously resuming no more than about ninety guineas of the said money, on account of an attorney's bill (for what services, to whom rendered, and when, — whether at the siege of Jerusalem, at the building of the Second Temple, or on some earlier occasion, — I have not yet been able to discover). How many perches this bill measured I really forget; but I still keep it in a cabinet of natural curiosities, and some time or other I believe I shall present it to the British Museum.

To this Jew, and to other advertising money-lenders (some of whom were, I believe, also Jews), I had introduced myself, with an account of my expectations; which account, on examining my father's will at Doctor's Commons, they had ascertained to be correct. The person there mentioned as the second son of — was found to have all the claims (or more than all) that I had stated: but one question still remained, which the faces of the Jews pretty significantly suggested, — was I that person? This doubt had never occurred to me as a possible one; I had rather feared, whenever my Jewish friends scrutinized me keenly, that I might be too well known to be that person, and that some scheme might be passing in their minds for entrapping me and selling me to my guardians. It was strange to me to find my own self, *materialiter* considered (so I expressed it, for I doted on logical accuracy of distinctions), accused, or at least suspected, of counterfeiting my own self, *formaliter* considered. However, to satisfy their scruples, I took the only course in my power. Whilst I was in Wales, I had received various letters from young friends: these I produced, — for I carried them constantly in my pocket, — being, indeed, by this time, almost the only relics of my personal incumbrances (excepting the clothes I wore), which I had not in one way or other disposed of. Most of these letters were from the Earl of —.<sup>16</sup> who was, at that time, my chief (or rather only) confidential friend. These letters were dated from Eton. I had also some from the Marquis of —,<sup>17</sup> his father, who, though absorbed in agricultural pursuits, yet having been an Etonian himself, and as good a scholar as a nobleman needs to be, still retained an affection for classical studies

and for youthful scholars. He had, accordingly, from the time that I was fifteen, corresponded with me: sometimes upon the great improvements which he had made, or was meditating, in the counties of M—— and Sl——,<sup>18</sup> since I had been there; sometimes upon the merits of a Latin poet; at other times, suggesting subjects to me on which he wished me to write verses.

On reading the letters, one of my Jewish friends agreed to furnish two or three hundred pounds on my personal security, provided I could persuade the young earl, — who was, by the way, not older than myself, — to guarantee the payment on our coming of age: the Jew's final object being, as I now suppose, not the trifling profit he could expect to make by me, but the prospect of establishing a connection with my noble friend, whose immense expectations were well known to him. In pursuance of this proposal on the part of the Jew, about eight or nine days after I had received the ten pounds, I prepared to go down to Eton. Nearly three pounds of the money I had given to my money-lending friend, on his alleging that the stamps must be bought, in order that the writings might be prepared whilst I was away from London. I thought in my heart that he was lying; but I did not wish to give him any excuse for charging his own delays upon me. A smaller sum I had given to my friend the attorney (who was connected with the money-lenders as their lawyer), to which, indeed, he was entitled for his unfurnished lodgings. About fifteen shillings I had employed in reëstablishing (though in a very humble way) my dress. Of the remainder, I gave one-quarter to Ann, meaning, on my return, to have divided with her whatever might remain

These arrangements made, soon after six o'clock, on a dark winter evening, I set off, accompanied by Ann, towards Piccadilly; for it was my intention to go down as far as Salt Hill on the Bath or Bristol mail. Our course lay through a part of the town which has now all disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries: Swallow-street, I think it was called. Having time enough before us, however, we bore away to the left, until we came into Golden-square: there, near the corner of Sherrard-street, we sat down, not wishing to part in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly. I had told her of my plans some time before; and now I assured her again that she should share in my good fortune, if I met with any; and that I would never forsake her, as soon as I had power to protect her. This I fully intended, as much from inclination as from a sense of duty; for, setting aside gratitude, which, in any case, must have made me her debtor for life, I loved her as affectionately as if she had been my sister; and at this moment with seven-fold tenderness, from pity at witnessing her extreme dejection. I had, apparently, most reason for dejection, because I was leaving the saviour of my life; yet I, considering the shock my health had received, was cheerful and full of hope. She, on the contrary, who was parting with one who had had little means of serving her, except by kindness and brotherly treatment, was overcome by sorrow; so that, when I kissed her at our final farewell, she put her arms about my neck, and wept, without speaking a word. I hoped to return in a week at furthest, and I agreed with her that on the fifth night from that, and every night afterwards, she should wait

for me, at six o'clock, near the bottom of Great Titchfield-street, which had been our customary haven, as it were, of rendezvous, to prevent our missing each other in the great Mediterranean of Oxford-street. This, and other measures of precaution, I took: one, only, I forgot. She had either never told me, or (as a matter of no great interest) I had forgotten, her surname. It is a general practice, indeed, with girls of humble rank in her unhappy condition, not (as novel-reading women of higher pretensions) to style themselves *Miss Douglass*, *Miss Montague*, &c., but simply by their Christian names, *Mary*, *Jane*, *Frances*, &c. Her surname, as the surest means of tracing her, I ought now to have inquired; but the truth is, having no reason to think that our meeting could, in consequence of a short interruption, be more difficult or uncertain than it had been for so many weeks, I had scarcely for a moment adverted to it as necessary, or placed it amongst my memoranda against this parting interview; and my final anxieties being spent in comforting her with hopes, and in pressing upon her the necessity of getting some medicine for a violent cough and hoarseness with which she was troubled, I wholly forgot it until it was too late to recall her.

It was past eight o'clock when I reached the Gloucester Coffee-House, and the Bristol Mail being on the point of going off, I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion\* of this mail soon laid me asleep. It is somewhat remarkable that the first easy or refreshing

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\* The Bristol Mail is the best appointed in the kingdom, owing to the double advantage of an unusually good road, and of an extra sum for expenses subscribed by the Bristol merchants.

sleep which I had enjoyed for some months was on the outside of a mail-coach, — a bed which, at this day, I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to convince me how easily a man, who has never been in any great distress, may pass through life without knowing, in his own person, at least, anything of the possible goodness of the human heart, or, as I must add with a sigh, of its possible vileness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's natures, that, to the ordinary observer, the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded, — the vast and multitudinous compass of their several harmonies reduced to the meagre outline of differences expressed in the gamut or alphabet of elementary sounds. The case was this: for the first four or five miles from London, I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof, by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch to his side; and, indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it is, I should have fallen off, from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily, as, perhaps, in the same circumstances, most people would. He expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant; and if I had parted with him at that moment, I should have thought of him (if I had considered it worth while to think of him at all) as a surly and almost brutal fellow. However, I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint, and, therefore, I apologized to him, and assured him I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the

future, and at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I was ill, and in a weak state from long suffering, and that I could not afford, at that time, to take an inside place. The man's manner changed, upon hearing this explanation, in an instant; and when I next woke for a minute, from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for, in spite of my wishes and efforts, I had fallen asleep again within two minutes from the time I had spoken to him), I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off; and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman, so that, at length, I almost lay in his arms; and this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol. Unfortunately, indeed, I *did* go rather further than I intended; for so genial and refreshing was my sleep, that the next time, after leaving Hounslow, that I fully awoke, was upon the sudden pulling up of the mail (possibly at a post-office), and, on inquiry, I found that we had reached Maidenhead, six or seven miles, I think, ahead of Salt Hill. Here I alighted; and for the half-minute that the mail stopped, I was entreated by my friendly companion (who, from the transient glimpse I had of him in Piccadilly, seemed to me to be a gentleman's butler, or person of that rank), to go to bed without delay. This I promised, though with no intention of doing so; and, in fact, immediately set forward, or, rather, backward, on foot. It must then have been nearly midnight; but so slowly did I creep along that I heard a clock in a cottage strike four before I turned down the lane from Slough to Eton. The air and the sleep had both



refreshed me ; but I was weary, nevertheless. I remember a thought (obvious enough, and which has been prettily expressed by a Roman poet) which gave me some consolation, at that moment, under my poverty. There had been, some time before, a murder committed on or near Hounslow Heath,<sup>19</sup> I think I cannot be mistaken when I say that the name of the murdered person was *Steele*, and that he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighborhood. Every step of my progress was bringing me nearer to the heath ; and it naturally occurred to me that I and the accursed murderer, if he were that night abroad, might, at every instant, be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness ; in which case, said I, supposing I — instead of being (as, indeed, I am, little better than an outcast,

Lord of my learning, and no land beside —

were, like my friend Lord ——,<sup>20</sup> heir, by general repute, to £70,000 per annum, what a panic should I be under, at this moment, about my throat ! Indeed, it was not likely that Lord —— should ever be in my situation ; but, nevertheless, the spirit of the remark remains true, that vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying ; and I am convinced that many of the most intrepid adventurers, who, by 'ortunately being poor, enjoy the full use of their natural courage, would, if, at the very instant of going into action, news were brought to them that they had unexpectedly succeeded to an estate in England of £50,000 a year, feel their dislike to bullets considerably sharp



ened,\* and their efforts at perfect equanimity and self-possession proportionably difficult. So true it is, in the language of a wise man, whose own experience had made him acquainted with both fortunes, that riches are better fitted

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,  
Than tempt her to do aught may merit praise.

*Paradise Regained.*

I dally with my subject, because, to myself, the remembrance of these times is profoundly interesting. But my reader shall not have any further cause to complain; for I now hasten to its close. In the road between Slough and Eton I fell asleep; and, just as the morning began to dawn, I was awakened by the voice of a man standing over me and surveying me. I know not what he was. He was an ill-looking fellow, but not, therefore, of necessity, an ill-meaning fellow; or, if he were, I suppose he thought that no person sleeping out-of-doors in winter could be worth robbing. In which conclusion, however, as it regarded myself, I beg to assure him, if he should be among my readers, that he was mistaken. After a slight remark, he passed on. I was not sorry at his disturbance, as it enabled me to pass through Eton before people were generally up. The night had been heavy and lowering, but towards the morning it had changed to a slight frost, and the ground and the trees were now covered with rime. I

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\* It will be objected that many men, of the highest rank and wealth, have, in our own day, as well as throughout our history, been amongst the foremost in courting danger in battle. True, but this is not the case supposed. Long familiarity with power has, to them, deadened its effect and its attractions.

slipped through Eton unobserved; washed myself, and as far as possible, adjusted my dress, at a little public house in Windsor; and, about eight o'clock, went down towards Pote's. On my road I met some junior boys, of whom I made inquiries. An Etonian is always a gentleman, and, in spite of my shabby habiliments, they answered me civilly. My friend, Lord ——, was gone to the University of ——.<sup>21</sup> "Ibi omnis effusus labor!" I had, however, other friends at Eton; but it is not to all who wear that name in prosperity that a man is willing to present himself in distress. On recollecting myself, however, I asked for the Earl of D——,<sup>22</sup> to whom (though my acquaintance with him was not so intimate as with some others) I should not have shrunk from presenting myself under any circumstances. He was still at Eton, though, I believe, on the wing for Cambridge. I called, was received kindly, and asked to breakfast.

Here let me stop, for a moment, to check my reader from any erroneous conclusions. Because I have had occasion incidentally to speak of various patrician friends, it must not be supposed that I have myself any pretensions to rank or high blood. I thank God that I have not. I am the son of a plain English merchant, esteemed, during his life, for his great integrity, and strongly attached to literary pursuits (indeed, he was himself, anonymously, an author). If he had lived, it was expected that he would have been very rich; but, dying prematurely, he left no more than about £30,000 amongst seven different claimants. My mother I may mention with honor, as still more highly gifted; for though unpretending to the name and honors of a *litt*

rary woman, I shall presume to call her (what many literary women are not) an *intellectual* woman; and I believe that if ever her letters should be collected and published, they would be thought generally to exhibit as much strong and masculine sense, delivered in as pure "mother English," racy and fresh with idiomatic graces, as any in our language, — hardly excepting those of Lady M. W. Montague. These are my honors of descent; I have no others; and I have thanked God sincerely that I have not, because, in my judgment, a station which raises a man too eminently above the level of his fellow-creatures, is not the most favorable to moral or to intellectual qualities.

Lord D—— placed before me a most magnificent breakfast. It was really so; but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent, from being the first regular meal, the first "good man's table," that I had sat down to for months. Strange to say, however, I could scarcely eat anything. On the day when I first received my ten-pound bank-note, I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls; this very shop I had two months or six weeks before surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was almost humiliating to me to recollect. I remembered the story about Otway; and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But I had no need for alarm; my appetite was quite sunk, and I became sick before I had eaten half of what I had bought. This effect, from eating what approached to a meal, I continued to feel for weeks; or, when I did not experience any nausea part of what I ate was rejected, sometimes with acidity, sometimes immediately and without any acidity. On the present occasion, at Lord

D——'s table, I found myself not at all better than usual; and, in the midst of luxuries, I had no appetite I had, however, unfortunately, at all times a craving for wine; I explained my situation, therefore, to Lord D——, and gave him a short account of my late sufferings, at which he expressed great compassion, and called for wine. This gave me a momentary relief and pleasure; and on all occasions, when I had an opportunity, I never failed to drink wine, which I worshipped then as I have since worshipped opium. I am convinced, however, that this indulgence in wine continued to strengthen my malady, for the tone of my stomach was apparently quite sunk; but, by a better regimen, it might sooner, and, perhaps, effectually, have been revived. I hope that it was not from this love of wine that I lingered in the neighborhood of my Eton friends; I persuaded myself *then* that it was from reluctance to ask of Lord D——, on whom I was conscious I had not sufficient claims, the particular service in quest of which I had come to Eton. I was, however, unwilling to lose my journey, and, — I asked it. Lord D——, whose good nature was unbounded, and which, in regard to myself, had been measured rather by his compassion perhaps for my condition, and his knowledge of my intimacy with some of his relatives, than by an over-rigorous inquiry into the extent of my own direct claims, faltered, nevertheless, at this request. He acknowledged that he did not like to have any dealings with money-lenders, and feared lest such a transaction might come to the ears of his connections. Moreover he doubted whether *his* signature, whose expectations were so much more bounded than those of ——, would

avail with my unchristian friends. However, he did not wish, as it seemed, to mortify me by an absolute refusal; for, after a little consideration, he promised, under certain conditions, which he pointed out, to give his security. Lord D—— was at this time not eighteen years of age; but I have often doubted, on recollecting, since, the good sense and prudence which on this occasion he mingled with so much urbanity of manner (an urbanity which in him wore the grace of youthful sincerity), whether any statesman—the oldest and the most accomplished in diplomacy—could have acquitted himself better under the same circumstances. Most people, indeed, cannot be addressed on such a business, without surveying you with looks as austere and unpropitious as those of a Saracen's head.

Recomforted by this promise, which was not quite equal to the best, but far above the worst, that I had pictured to myself as possible, I returned in a Windsor coach to London three days after I had quitted it. And now I come to the end of my story. The Jews did not approve of Lord D——'s terms; whether they would in the end have acceded to them, and were only seeking time for making due inquiries, I know not; but many delays were made, — time passed on, — the small fragment of my bank-note had just melted away, and before any conclusion could have been put to the business, I must have relapsed into my former state of wretchedness. Suddenly, however, at this crisis, an opening was made, almost by accident, for reconciliation with my friends.<sup>23</sup> I quitted London in haste, for a remote part of England; after some time, I proceeded to the university; and it was not until many months

had passed away, that I had it in my power again to revisit the ground which had become so interesting to me, and to this day remains so, as the chief scene of my youthful sufferings.

Meantime, what had become of poor Ann? For her I have reserved my concluding words; according to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I stayed in London, at the corner of Titchfield-street. I inquired for her of every one who was likely to know her; and during the last hours of my stay in London, I put into activity every means of tracing her that my knowledge of London suggested, and the limited extent of my power made possible. The street where she had lodged I knew, but not the house; and I remembered, at last, some account which she had given of ill treatment from her landlord, which made it probable that she had quitted those lodgings before we parted. She had few acquaintances; most people, besides, thought that the earnestness of my inquiries arose from motives which moved their laughter or their slight regard; and others, thinking that I was in chase of a girl who had robbed me of some trifles, were naturally and excusably indisposed to give me any clue to her, if, indeed, they had any to give. Finally, as my despairing resource, on the day I left London, I put into the hands of the only person who (I was sure) must know Ann: by sight, from having been in company with us once or twice, an address to ——— in ———shire, at that time the residence of my family. But, to this hour, I have never heard a syllable about her. This, amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction. If

she lived, doubtless we must have been sometimes in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London; perhaps even within a few feet of each other, — a barrier no wider, in a London street, often amounting in the end to a separation for eternity! During some years, I hoped that she *did* live; and I suppose that, in the literal and unrheterical use of the word *myriad*, I may say, that on my different visits to London, I have looked into many, many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting her. I should know her again amongst a thousand, if I saw her for a moment; for, though not handsome, she had a sweet expression of countenance, and a peculiar and graceful carriage of the head. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years; but now I should fear to see her; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. I now wish to see her no longer, but think of her, more gladly, as one long since laid in the grave; — in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen; — taken away, before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenious nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

So then, Oxford-street, stony-hearted stepmother, thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans, and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee! — the time was come, at last, that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces; no more should dream, and wake in captivity to the pangs of hunger. Successors, too many, to myself and Ann, have, doubtless, since then trodden in our footsteps, wheritors of our calamities; other orphans than Ann

have sighed, tears have been shed by other children; and thou, Oxford-street, hast since echoed to the groans of innumerable hearts. For myself, however, the storm which I had outlived seemed to have been the pledge of a long fair weather; the premature sufferings which I had paid down, to have been accepted as a ransom for many years to come, as a price of long immunity from sorrow; and if again I walked in London, a solitary and contemplative man (as oftentimes I did), I walked for the most part in serenity and peace of mind. And, although it is true that the calamities of my novitiate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a maturer intellect, and with alleviations from sympathizing affection, how deep and tender!

Thus, however, with whatsoever alleviations, years that were far asunder were bound together by subtle links of suffering derived from a common root. And herein I notice an instance of the short-sightedness of human desires,—that oftentimes, on moonlight nights, during my first mournful abode in London, my consolation was (if such it could be thought) to gaze from Oxford-street up every avenue in succession which pierces through the heart of Mary-le-bone to the fields and the woods; for *that*, said I, travelling with my eyes up the long vistas which lay part in light and part in shade, "*that* is the road to the north, and, therefore, to ——— and if I had the wings of a dove, *that* way I would fly



for comfort." Thus I said, and thus I wished in my blindness; yet, even in that very northern region it was, in that very valley, nay, in that very house to which my erroneous wishes pointed, that this second birth of my sufferings began, and that they again threatened to besiege the citadel of life and hope. There it was that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and as ghastly phantoms, as ever haunted the couch of an Orestes; and in this unhappier than he,—that sleep, which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially as a blessed balm for his wounded heart and his haunted brain, visited me as my bitterest scourge. Thus blind was I in my desires; yet, if a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same vale hides from him their alleviations; and a grief which had not been feared is met by consolations which had not been hoped. I, therefore, who participated, as it were, in the troubles of Orestes (excepting only in his agitated conscience), participated no less in all his supports; my Eumenides, like his, were at my bed-feet, and stared in upon me through the curtains; but, watching by my pillow, or defrauding herself of sleep to bear me company through the heavy watches of the night, sat my Electra; for thou, beloved M., dear companion of my later years, thou wast my Electra! and neither in nobility of mind nor in long-suffering affection wouldst permit that a Grecian sister should excel an English wife. For thou thoughtest not much to stoop to humble offices of kindness, and to servile ministrations of tenderest affection; to wipe away for years the unwholesome dews upon the forehead, or to refresh the lips

when parched and baked with fever; nor even when thy own peaceful slumbers had by long sympathy become infected with the spectacle of my dread contest with phantoms and shadowy enemies, that oftentimes bade me "sleep no more!"—not even then didst thou utter a complaint or any murmur, nor withdraw thy angelic smiles, nor shrink from thy service of love, more than Electra did of old. For she, too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king\* of men, yet wept sometimes, and hid her face † in her robe.

But these troubles are past, and thou wilt read these records of a period so dolorous to us both as the legend of some hideous dream that can return no more. Meantime I am again in London; and again I pace the terraces of Oxford-street by night; and oftentimes,—when I am oppressed by anxieties that demand all my philosophy and the comfort of thy presence to support, and yet remember that I am separated from thee by three hundred miles, and the length of three dreary months,—I look up the streets that run northward from Oxford-street, upon moonlight nights, and recollect my youthful ejaculation of anguish; and remem-

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\* Agamemnon.

† *Ὀμίμα θείης εἰς πέπλον.* The scholar will know that throughout this passage I refer to the early scenes of the Orestes, — one of the most beautiful exhibitions of the domestic affections which even the dramas of Euripides can furnish. To the English reader, it may be necessary to say, that the situation at the opening of the drama is that of a brother attended only by his sister during the temoniacal possession of a suffering conscience (or, in the mythology of the play, haunted by the furies), and in circumstances of immediate danger from enemies, and of desertion or cold regard from nominal friends.

ering that thou art sitting alone in that same valley, and mistress of that very house to which my heart turned in its blindness nineteen years ago, I think that, though blind indeed, and scattered to the winds of fate, the promptings of my heart may yet have had reference to a remoter time, and may be justified if read in another meaning; and if I could allow myself to descend again to the impotent wishes of childhood, I should again say to myself, as I look to the north, "O that I had the wings of a dove!" and with how just a confidence in thy good and gracious nature might I add the other half of my early ejaculation,— "**And that way I would fly for comfort!**"

## THE PLEASURES OF OPIUM.

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It is so long since I first took opium, that if it had been a trifling incident in my life, I might have forgotten its date: but cardinal events are not to be forgotten; and, from circumstances connected with it, I remember that it must be referred to the autumn of 1804. During that season I was in London, having come thither for the first time since my entrance at college. And my introduction to opium arose in the following way: From an early age I had been accustomed to wash my head in cold water at least once a day; being suddenly seized with tooth-ache, I attributed it to some relaxation caused by an accidental intermission of that practice; jumped out of bed, plunged my head into a basin of cold water, and, with hair thus wetted, went to sleep. The next morning, as I need hardly say, I awoke with excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face, from which I had hardly any respite for about twenty days. On the twenty-first day I think it was, and on a Sunday, that I went out into the streets; rather to run away, if possible, from my torments, than with any distinct purpose. By accident, I met a college acquaintance, who recommended opium. Opium! dread

agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain! I had heard of it as I had heard of manna or of ambrosia, but no further; how unmeaning a sound was it at that time! what solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart! what heart-quaking vibrations of sad and happy remembrances! Reverting for a moment to these, I feel a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place, and the time, and the man (if man he was), that first laid open to me the paradise of opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless; and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay through Oxford-street; and near "the *stately* Pantheon" (as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it) I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist (unconscious minister of celestial pleasures!), as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a Sunday; and when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do; and, furthermore, out of my shilling returned to me what seemed to be a real copper half-penny, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, in spite of such indications of humanity, he has ever since existed in my mind as a beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him, that when I next came up to London, I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not, and thus to me, who knew not his name (if, indeed, he had one), he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford-street than to have removed to any bodily

fashion. The reader may choose to think of him as possibly, no more than a sublunary druggist: it may be so, but my faith is better: I believe him to have evanesced,\* or evaporated. So unwillingly would I connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature, that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

Arrived at my lodgings, it may be supposed that I lost not a moment in taking the quantity prescribed. I was necessarily ignorant of the whole art and mystery of opium-taking; and what I took, I took under every disadvantage. But I took it; and in an hour,—oh heavens! what a revulsion! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me! That my pains had vanished was now a trifle in my eyes; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me, in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea, a *φαρμακον νεπερθεσ*, for all human woes here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and

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\* *Evanesced*:—this way of going off from the stage of life appears to have been well known in the 17th century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of blood royal and by no means to be allowed to druggists. For, about the year 1686, a poet of rather ominous name (and who, by the by, did ample justice to his name), namely, Mr. FLAT-MAN, in speaking of the death of Charles II., expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so absurd an act as dying; because, says he,

Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*;  
They should *abscond*, that is, into the other world.

carried in the waistcoat-pocket; portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint-bottle; and peace of mind could be sent down in gallons by the mail-coach. But, if I talk in this way, the reader will think I am laughing; and I can assure him that nobody will laugh long who deals much with opium: its pleasures even are of a grave and solemn complexion; and, in his happiest state, the opium-eater cannot present himself in the character of *L'Allegro*; even then, he speaks and thinks as becomes *Il Penseroso*. Nevertheless, I have a very reprehensible way of jesting, at times, in the midst of my own misery; and, unless when I am checked by some more powerful feelings, I am afraid I shall be guilty of this indecent practice even in these annals of suffering or enjoyment. The reader must allow a little to my infirm nature in this respect; and, with a few indulgences of that sort, I shall endeavor to be as grave, if not drowsy, as fits a theme like opium, so anti-mercurial as it really is, and so drowsy as it is falsely reputed.

And, first, one word with respect to its bodily effects; for upon all that has been hitherto written on the subject of opium, whether by travellers in Turkey (who may plead their privilege of lying as an old immemorial right) or by professors of medicine, writing *ex cathedra* I have but one emphatic criticism to pronounce, — Lies! lies! lies! I remember once, in passing a book stall, to have caught these words from a page of some satiric author: "By this time I became convinced that the London newspapers spoke truth at least twice a week, namely, on Tuesday and Saturday, and might safely be depended upon for — the list of bankrupts."

In like manner, I do by no means deny that some truths have been delivered to the world in regard to opium; thus, it has been repeatedly affirmed, by the learned, that opium is a dusky brown in color,—and this, take notice, I grant; secondly, that it is rather dear, which also I grant,—for, in my time, East India opium has been three guineas a pound, and Turkey, eight; and, thirdly, that if you eat a good deal of it, most probably you must do what is particularly disagreeable to any man of regular habits, namely, — die.\* These weighty propositions are, all and singular, true; I cannot gainsay them; and truth ever was, and will be, commendable. But, in these three theorems, I believe we have exhausted the stock of knowledge as yet accumulated by man on the subject of opium. And, therefore, worthy doctors, as there seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter.

First, then, it is not so much affirmed as taken for granted, by all who ever mention opium, formally or incidentally, that it does or can produce intoxication. Now, reader, assure yourself, *meo periculo*, that no quantity of opium ever did, or could, intoxicate. As to the tincture of opium (commonly called laudanum), *that* might certainly intoxicate, if a man could bear to take enough of it; but why? because it contains so

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\* Of this, however, the learned appear latterly to have doubted; for, in a pirated edition of Buchan's DOMESTIC MEDICINE, which I once saw in the hands of a farmer's wife, who was studying it for the benefit of her health, the doctor was made to say, — "Be particularly careful never to take above five-and-twenty *ounccs* of laudauum at once." The true reading being probably five-and-twenty *drops*, which are held to be equal to about one grain of crude opium



much proof spirit, and not because it contains so much opium. But crude opium, I affirm peremptorily, is incapable of producing any state of body at all resembling that which is produced by alcohol; and not in *degree* only incapable, but even in *kind*; it is not in the quantity of its effects merely, but in the quality, that it differs altogether. The pleasure given by wine is always mounting, and tending to a crisis, after which it declines; that from opium, when once generated, is stationary for eight or ten hours: the first, to borrow a technical distinction from medicine, is a case of acute, the second of chronic, pleasure; the one is a flame, the other a steady and equable glow. But the main distinction lies in this, that whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession; opium greatly invigorates it. Wine unsettles and clouds the judgment, and gives a preternatural brightness, and a vivid exaltation, to the contempts and the admirations, to the loves and the hatreds, of the drinker; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive; and, with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general, it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval or antediluvian heath. Thus, for instance, opium, like wine, gives an expansion to the heart and the benevolent affections; but, then, with this remarkable difference, that in the sudden development of kind-heartedness which accompanies inebriation.

there is always more or less of a maudlin character which exposes it to the contempt of the bystander. Men shake hands, swear eternal friendship, and shed tears,—no mortal knows why; and the sensual creature is clearly uppermost. But the expansion of the benigner feelings, incident to opium, is no febrile access, but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. True it is, that even wine, up to a certain point, and with certain men, rather tends to exalt and to steady the intellect; I myself, who have never been a great wine-drinker, used to find that half a dozen glasses of wine advantageously affected the faculties, brightened and intensified the consciousness, and gave to the mind a feeling of being “ponderibus librata suis;” and certainly it is most absurdly said, in popular language, of any man, that he is *disguised* in liquor; for, on the contrary, most men are disguised by sobriety; and it is when they are drinking (as some old gentleman says in Athenæus) that men display themselves in their true complexion of character; which surely is not disguising themselves. But still, wine constantly leads a man to the brink of absurdity and extravagance: and, beyond a certain point, it is sure to volatilize and to disperse the intellectual energies; whereas opium always seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted. In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated, or tending to inebriation, is, and feels that he is, in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human

soo often the brutal, part of his nature; but the opium-eater (I speak of him who is not suffering from any disease, or other remote effects of opium) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount; that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity; and over all is the great light of the majestic intellect.

This is the doctrine of the true church on the subject of opium: of which church I acknowledge myself to be the only member, — the alpha and omega; but then it is to be recollected, that I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience, whereas most of the unscientific\* authors who have at all treated of

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\* Amongst the great herd of travellers, &c., who show sufficiently by their stupidity that they never held any intercourse with opium, I must caution my readers specially against the brilliant author of "*Anastasius*." This gentleman, whose wit would lead one to presume him an opium-eater, has made it impossible to consider him in that character, from the grievous misrepresentation which he has given of its effects, at page 215-217, of vol. I. Upon consideration, it must appear such to the author himself; for, waiving the errors I have insisted on in the text, which (and others) are adopted in the fullest manner, he will himself admit that an old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," who eats "ample doses of opium," and is yet able to deliver what is meant and received as very weighty counsel on the bad effects of that practice, is but an indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely, or sends them into a mad-house. But, for my part, I see into this old gentleman and his motives; the fact is, he was enamored of "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug," which Anastasius carried about him; and no way of obtaining it so safe and so feasible occurred, as that of frightening its owner out of his wits (which, by the by, are none of the strongest). This commentary throws a new light upon the case, and greatly improves it as a story; for the old gentleman's speech, considered as a lecture on pharmacy, is highly absurd; but, considered as a hoax on Anastasius, it reads excellently.

opium, and even of those who have written expressly on the *materia medica*, make it evident, from the horror they express of it, that their experimental knowledge of its action is none at all. I will, however, candidly acknowledge that I have met with one person who bore evidence to its intoxicating power, such as staggered my own incredulity; for he was a surgeon, and had himself taken opium largely.<sup>24</sup> It happened to say to him, that his enemies (as I had heard) charged him with talking nonsense on politics, and that his friends apologized for him by suggesting that he was constantly in a state of intoxication from opium. Now, the accusation, said I, is not *prima facie*, and of necessity, an absurd one; but the defence *is*. To my surprise, however, he insisted that both his enemies and his friends were in the right. "I will maintain," said he, "that I *do* talk nonsense; and secondly, I will maintain that I do not talk nonsense upon principle, or with any view to profit, but solely and simply," said he, "solely and simply, — solely and simply (repeating it three times over), because I am drunk with opium; and that daily." I replied, that as to the allegation of his enemies, as it seemed to be established upon such respectable testimony, seeing that the three parties concerned all agreed in it, it did not become me to question it; but the defence set up I must demur to. He proceeded to discuss the matter, and to lay down his reasons; but it seemed to me so impolite to pursue an argument which must have presumed a man mistaken on a point belonging to his own profession, that I did not press him even when his course of argument seemed open to objection; not to mention that a man

who talks nonsense, even though "with no view to profit," is not altogether the most agreeable partner in a dispute, whether as opponent or respondent. I confess, however, that the authority of a surgeon, and one who was reputed a good one, may seem a weighty one to my prejudice; but still I must plead my experience, which was greater than his greatest by seven thousand drops a day; and though it was not possible to suppose a medical man unacquainted with the characteristic symptoms of vinous intoxication, yet it struck me that he might proceed on a logical error of using the word intoxication with too great latitude, and extending it generically to all modes of nervous excitement, instead of restricting it as the expression of a specific sort of excitement, connected with certain diagnostics. Some people have maintained, in my hearing, that they had been drunk upon green tea; and a medical student in London, for whose knowledge in his profession I have reason to feel great respect, assured me, the other day, that a patient, in recovering from an illness, had got drunk on a beef-steak.

Having dwelt so much on this first and leading error in respect to opium, I shall notice very briefly a second and a third; which are, that the elevation of spirits produced by opium is necessarily followed by a proportionate depression, and that the natural and even immediate consequence of opium is torpor and stagnation animal and mental. The first of these errors I shall content myself with simply denying; assuring my reader, that for ten years, during which I took opium at intervals, the day succeeding to that on which I allowed

myself this luxury was always a day of unusually good spirits.

With respect to the torpor supposed to follow, or rather (if we were to credit the numerous pictures of Turkish opium-eaters) to accompany, the practice of opium-eating, I deny that also. Certainly, opium is classed under the head of narcotics, and some such effect it may produce in the end; but the primary effects of opium are always, and in the highest degree, to excite and stimulate the system: this first stage of its action always lasted with me, during my novitiate, for upwards of eight hours; so that it must be the fault of the opium-eater himself, if he does not so time his exhibition of the dose (to speak medically) as that the whole weight of its narcotic influence may descend upon his sleep. Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on logs of wood as stupid as themselves. But, that the reader may judge of the degree in which opium is likely to stupefy the faculties of an Englishman, I shall (by way of treating the question illustratively, rather than argumentatively) describe the way in which I myself often passed an opium evening in London, during the period between 1804 and 1812. It will be seen, that at least opium did not move me to seek solitude, and much less to seek inactivity, or the torpid state of self-involution ascribed to the Turks. I give this account at the risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary; but I regard that little. I must desire my reader to bear in mind, that I was a hard student, and at severe studies for all the rest of my time; and certainly I had a right occasionally to relax

nons as well as other people: these, however, I allowed myself but seldom.

The late Duke of ——<sup>25</sup> used to say, "Next Friday, by the blessing of Heaven, I purpose to be drunk;" and in like manner I used to fix beforehand how often, within a given time, and when, I would commit a debauch of opium. This was seldom more than once in three weeks; for at that time I could not have ventured to call every day (as I did afterwards) for "*a glass of laudanum negus, warm, and without sugar.*" No; as I have said, I seldom drank laudanum, at that time more than once in three weeks: this was usually on a Tuesday or a Saturday night; my reason for which was this. In those days, Grassini<sup>26</sup> sang at the opera, and her voice was delightful to me beyond all that I had ever heard. I know not what may be the state of the opera-house now, having never been within its walls for seven or eight years; but at that time it was by much the most pleasant place of resort in London for passing an evening. Five shillings admitted one to the gallery, which was subject to far less annoyance than the pit of the theatres; the orchestra was distinguished, by its sweet and melodious grandeur, from all English orchestras, the composition of which, I confess, is not acceptable to my ear, from the predominance of the clangorous instruments, and the almost absolute tyranny of the violin. The choruses were divine to hear; and when Grassini appeared in some interlude, as she often did, and poured forth her passionate soul as Andromache, at the tomb of Hector, &c., I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the paradise of opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But, indeed, I honor the barba-



rians too much by supposing them capable of any pleasures approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman. For music is an intellectual or a sensual pleasure, according to the temperament of him who hears it. And, by the by, with the exception of the fine extravaganza on that subject in Twelfth Night, I do not recollect more than one thing said adequately on the subject of music in all literature; it is a passage in the *Religio Medici*\* of Sir T. Brown, and, though chiefly remarkable for its sublimity, has also a philosophic value, inasmuch as it points to the true theory of musical effects. The mistake of most people is, to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and therefore that they are purely passive to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the re action of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed; and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. But, says a friend, a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters: I can attach no ideas to them. Ideas! my good sir? there is no occasion for them; all that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a sub-

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\* I have not the book at this moment to consult; but I think the passage begins, "And even that tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad in me strikes a deep fit of devotion," &c.



ject foreign to my present purposes; it is sufficient to say, that a chorus, &c., of elaborate harmony, displayed before me, as in a piece of arras-work, the whole of my past life, — not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no longer painful to dwell upon, but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualized, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women, — for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians, — and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld, the traveller, lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women; for the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds. For such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken.

These were my opera pleasures; but another pleasure I had, which, as it could be had only on a Saturday night, occasionally struggled with my love of the opera; for, at that time, Tuesday and Saturday were the regular opera nights. On this subject I am afraid I shall be rather obscure, but, I can assure the reader, not at all more so than Marinus in his life of Proclus, or many other biographers and auto-biographers of fair reputation. This pleasure, I have said, was to be had only on a Saturday night. What, then, was Saturday night to me, more than any other night? I had no labors that

I rested from ; no wages to receive ; what needed I to care for Saturday night, more than as it was a summons to hear Grassini? True, most logical reader ; what you say is unanswerable. And yet so it was and is, that whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor chiefly by sympathy, expressed in some shape or other, with their distresses and sorrows, I, at that time, was disposed to express my interest by sympathizing with their pleasures. The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much of, — more than I wished to remember ; but the pleasures of the poor, their consolations of spirit, and their repose from bodily toil, can never become oppressive to contemplate. Now, Saturday night is the season for the chief regular and periodic return of rest to the poor ; in this point the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood ; almost all Christendom rests from its labors. It is a rest introductory to another rest ; and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account I feel always, on a Saturday night, as though I also were released from some yoke of labor, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing, upon as large a scale as possible, a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets, and other parts of London, to which the poor resort on a Saturday night, for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two

of his children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of discontent; but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, hope, and tranquillity. And, taken generally, I must say, that, in this point, at least, the poor are far more philosophic than the rich; that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils, or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties, and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher, or expected to be so, or the quarter loaf a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were expected to fall, I was glad; yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consoling myself. For opium (like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot<sup>27</sup> of chimneys) can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master-key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances; for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. And sometimes, in my attempts to steer homewards, upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the capes and head-lands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical

entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares, as must, I conceive, baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of hackney-coachmen. I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terra incognita*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannized over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back and haunted my sleep, with the feeling of perplexities moral or intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason, or anguish and remorse to the conscience.

Thus I have shown that opium does not, of necessity, produce inactivity or torpor; but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres. Yet, in candor, I will admit that markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater, when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state, crowds become an oppression to him; music, even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indispensable conditions of those trances, or profoundest reveries, which are the crown and consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate too much and to observe too little, and who, upon my first entrance at college, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of the tendencies of my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who according to the old legend, had entered the cave of

Trophonius; and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon matters of science. But for these remedies, I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully reëstablished, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. And at that time I often fell into these reveries upon taking opium; and more than once it has happened to me, on a summer night, when I have been at an open window, in a room from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could command a view of the great town of L——, <sup>28</sup> at about the same distance, that I have sat from sunset to sunrise, motionless, and without wishing to move.

I shall be charged with mysticism, Behmenism, quietism, &c.; but that shall not alarm me. Sir H. Vane, the younger, was one of our wisest men; and let my readers see if he, in his philosophical works, be half as unmythical as I am. I say, then, that it has often struck me that the scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of L—— represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, and brooded over by dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind, and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if then first I stood at a distance, and aloof from the uproar of life; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended; a respite granted from the secret burdens of the heart; a sabbath of repose; a resting from human labors. Here were the

hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a hazy calm; a tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose.

O just, subtile, and mighty opium! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for "the pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel," bringest an assuaging balm;—eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath, and, to the guilty man, for one night givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure from blood; and, to the proud man, a brief oblivion for

Wrongs unredressed, and insults unavenged;

that summonest to the chancery of dreams, for the triumphs of suffering innocence, false witnesses, and confoundest perjury, and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges;—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples, beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles,—beyond the splendor of Babylon and Hekatompylos; and, "from the anarchy of dreaming sleep," callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the "dishonors of the grave." Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, O just, subtile, and mighty opium!

## INTRODUCTION

TO

## THE PAINS OF OPIUM.

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COURTEOUS, and, I hope, indulgent reader (for all my readers must be indulgent ones, or else, I fear, I shall shock them too much to count on their courtesy), having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards, for about eight years; that is to say, from 1804 (when I said that my acquaintance with opium first began) to 1812. The years of academic life are now over and gone,—almost forgotten; the student's cap no longer presses my temples; if my cap exists at all, it presses those of some youthful scholar, I trust, as happy as myself, and as passionate a lover of knowledge. My gown is, by this time, I dare to say, in the same condition with many thousands of excellent books in the Bodleian, namely, diligently peused by certain studious moths and worms; or departed, however (which is all that I know of its fate), to that great reservoir of *somewhere*, to which all the tea-cups, tea-caddies, tea-pots, tea-kettles, &c.,

have departed (not to speak of still frailer vessels, such as glasses, decanters, bed-makers, &c.), which occasional resemblances in the present generation of tea-cups, &c., remind me of having once possessed, but of whose departure and final fate, I, in common with most gowmsmen of either university, could give, I suspect, but an obscure and conjectural history. The persecutions of the chapel-bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to six o'clock matins, interrupts my slumbers no longer; the porter who rang it, upon whose beautiful nose (bronze, inlaid with copper) I wrote, in retaliation, so many Greek epigrams whilst I was dressing, is dead, and has ceased to disturb anybody; and I, and many others who suffered much from his tintinabulous propensities, have now agreed to overlook his errors, and have forgiven him. Even with the bell I am now in charity; it rings, I suppose, as formerly, thrice a day; and cruelly annoys, I doubt not, many worthy gentlemen, and disturbs their peace of mind; but, as to me, in this year 1812, I regard its treacherous voice no longer (treacherous I call it, for, by some refinement of malice, it spoke in as sweet and silvery tones as if it had been inviting one to a party); its tones have no longer, indeed, power to reach me let the wind sit as favorable as the malice of the bell itself could wish; for I am two hundred and fifty miles away from it, and buried in the depth of mountains. And what am I doing amongst the mountains? Taking opium. Yes, but what else? Why, reader, in 1812, the year we are now arrived at, as well as for some years previous, I have been chiefly studying German metaphysics, in the writings of Kant, Fichte



Schelling. &c. And how, and in what manner, do I live? in short, what class or description of men do I belong to? I am at this period, namely, in 1812, living in a cottage; and with a single female servant (*honi soit qui mal y pense*), who, amongst my neighbors, passes by the name of my "house-keeper." And, as a scholar and a man of learned education, and in that sense a gentleman, I may presume to class myself as an unworthy member of that indefinite body called *gentlemen*. Partly on the ground I have assigned, perhaps, — partly because, from my having no visible calling or business, it is rightly judged that I must be living on my private fortune, — I am so classed by my neighbors; and, by the courtesy of modern England, I am usually addressed on letters, &c., *Esquire*, though having, I fear, in the rigorous construction of heralds, but slender pretensions to that distinguished honor; — yes, in popular estimation, I am X. Y. Z., Esquire, but not Justice of the Peace, nor Custos Rotulorum. Am I married? Not yet. And I still take opium? On Saturday nights. And, perhaps, have taken it unblushingly ever since "the rainy Sunday," and "the stately Pantheon," and "the beatific druggist" of 1804? Even so. And how do I find my health after all this opium-eating? in short, how do I do? Why, pretty well, I thank you, reader; in the phrase of ladies in the straw, "as well as can be expected." In fact, if I dared to say the real and simple truth (it must not be forgotten that hitherto I thought, to satisfy the theories of medical men, I ought to be ill). I was never better in my life than in the spring of 1812; and I hope sincerely, that the quantity of claret, port, or particular Madeira,"

which, in all probability, you, good reader, have taken and design to take, for every term of eight years, during your natural life, may as little disorder your health as mine was disordered by opium I had taken for the eight years between 1804 and 1812. Hence you may see again the danger of taking any medical advice from *Anastasius*; <sup>29</sup> in divinity, for aught I know, or law, he may be a safe counsellor, but not in medicine. No; it is far better to consult Dr. Buchan, as I did; for I never forgot that worthy man's excellent suggestion, and I was "particularly careful not to take above five-and-twenty ounces of laudanum." To this moderation and temperate use of the article I may ascribe it, I suppose, that as yet, at least (that is, in 1812), I am ignorant and unsuspecting of the avenging terrors which opium has in store for those who abuse its lenity. At the same time, I have been only a *dilettante* eater of opium; eight years' practice, even, with the single precaution of allowing sufficient intervals between every indulgence, has not been sufficient to make opium necessary to me as an article of daily diet. But now comes a different era. Move on, if you please, reader, to 1813. In the summer of the year we have just quitted, I had suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a very melancholy event. This event, being no ways related to the subject now before me, further than through bodily illness which it produced, I need not more particularly notice. Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813, I know not; but so it was, that, in the latter year, I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach in all respects the same as that which had caused me

so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams. This is the point of my narrative on which, as respects my own self-justification, the whole of what follows may be said to hinge. And here I find myself in a perplexing dilemma:— Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience, by such a detail of my malady, and of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering; or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over this critical part of my story, I must forego the benefit of a stronger impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconception of having slipped by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating (a misconception to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers, from my previous acknowledgments). This is the dilemma, the first horn of which would be sufficient to cross and gore any column of patient readers, though drawn up sixteen deep, and constantly relieved by fresh men; consequently *that* is not to be thought of. It remains, then, that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. And let me take as full credit for what I postulate as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, at the expense of your patience and my own. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for your comfort. No, believe all that I ask of you, namely, that I could resist no longer, — believe it liberally, and as an act of grace, or else in mere prudence; for, if not, then, in the next edition of my *Opium Confessions*

revised and enlarged, I will make you believe, and tremble; and, *a force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation, I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make.

This, then, let me repeat: I postulate that, at the time I began to take opium daily, I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards, I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which I *did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual re-conquests of ground lost might not have been followed up much more energetically,—these are questions which I must decline. Perhaps I might make out a case of palliation; but—shall I speak ingenuously?—I confess it, as a besetting infirmity of mine, that I am too much of an Eudæmonist; I hanker too much after a state of happiness, both for myself and others; I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of sufficient firmness; and am little capable of encountering present pain for the sake of any reversionary benefit. On some other matters, I can agree with the gentlemen in the cotton trade\* at Manchester in affecting the Stoic philosophy; but not in this. Here I take the liberty of an Eclectic philosopher, and I look out for some courteous and considerate sect that will condescend more to the infirm condition of an

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\* A handsome news-room, of which I was very politely made free in passing through Manchester, by several gentlemen of that place, is called, I think, *The Porch*; whence I, who am a stranger in Manchester, inferred that the subscribers meant to profess themselves followers of Zeno. But I have been since assured that this is a mistake.

opium-eater; that are "sweet men," as Chaucer says, "to give absolution," and will show some conscience in the penances they inflict, and the efforts of abstinence they exact from poor sinners like myself. An inhuman moralist I can no more endure, in my nervous state, than opium that has not been boiled. At any rate, he who summons me to send out a large freight of self-denial and mortification upon any cruising voyage of moral improvement, must make it clear to my understanding that the concern is a hopeful one. At my time of life (six-and-thirty years of age), it cannot be supposed that I have much energy to spare; in fact, I find it all little enough for the intellectual labors I have on my hands; and, therefore, let no man expect to frighten me by a few hard words into embarking any part of it upon desperate adventures of morality.

Whether desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have mentioned; and from this date the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium, would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions. You understand now, reader, what I am; and you are by this time aware, that no old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," will have any chance of persuading me to surrender "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug." No. I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or Ramadam of absti-

nence from opium. This, then, being all fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind. Now, then, reader, from 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering, rise up, if you please, and walk forward about three years more. Now draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out, Hear him! hear him! As to the happiest day, that must be very difficult for any wise man to name; because any event, that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of his life, or be entitled to have shed a special felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character, as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, it may be allowed to any man to point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in my case, reader, was the one which we have now reached; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewellers), set, as it were, and insulated, in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from three hundred and twenty grains of opium (that is, eight\* thou-

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\* I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which, I believe, is the common estimate

sand drops\* of laudanum) per day, to forty grains, or one-eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapors that I have seen roll away from the summits of mountains, drew off in one day; passed off with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring tide, —

That moveth altogether, if it move at all.

Now, then, I was again happy: I now took only one thousand drops of laudanum per day, — and what was that? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth: my brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before. I read Kant again, and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me; and, if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else was wanting to a wise man's happiness, of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember, about this time, a little incident, which I mention, because,

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However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Tea-spoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about one hundred drops: so that eight thousand drops are about eighty times a tea-spoonful. The reader sees how much I kept within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance.



trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains, I cannot conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport about forty miles distant.<sup>30</sup>

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl, born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban therefore, confounded her not a little; and as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down; but when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but panelled on the wall with dark wood, that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay, his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the



dark panelling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed, as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined, than the beautiful English face of the girl,<sup>31</sup> and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures, and adorations. Half hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay, was a little child from a neighboring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection.

My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being, indeed, confined to two words, — the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learnt from Anastasius. And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the Iliad; considering that, of such language as I possessed, the Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbors; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an

hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar, and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and (in the school-boy phrase) bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses, and I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that, if he had travelled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No; there was clearly no help for it. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but, as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used\* to opium, and

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✓ \* This, however, is not a necessary conclusion; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's "Struggles through Life," vol. iii., p. 391, third edition) has recorded that on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout, he took FORTY drops; the next night SIXTY, and on the fifth night EIGHTY, without any effect whatever; and this at an advanced age. I have an anecdote from a country surgeon, however, which sinks Mr. Harriott's case into a trifle and, in my projected medical treatise on opium, which I will publish provided the College of Surgeons will pay me for enlightening their benighted understandings upon this subject, I will relate it. but it is far too good a story to be published gratis.

that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran "a-muck"\* at me, and led me into a world of troubles. But, to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have said already, that on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a ploughboy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep in such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East India and Turkey, — who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery, — and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of eight hundred drops of laudanum per day (just for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with a cancer, — an English one, twenty years ago, with plague, — and a third, I know not of what nation, with hydrophobia), — I, it will be admitted, must surely

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\* See the common accounts in any Eastern traveller or voyager of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill luck at gambling.

know what happiness is, if anybody does. And therefore I will here lay down an analysis of happiness and, as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapt up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure. This done, I shall quit the subject of happiness altogether, and pass to a very different one, - the *pains of opium*.

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley,<sup>32</sup> eighteen miles from any town; no spacious valley, but about two miles long by three quarters of a mile in average width, — the benefit of which provision is, that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household, personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high, and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) “a cottage with a double coach-house;” let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering around the windows, through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn; beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn; but winter, in its sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it and think it matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one.

On the contrary, I put up a petition, annually, for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford us. Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside,—candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

And at the doors and windows seem to call  
As heaven and earth they would together mell;  
Yet the least entrance find they none at all;  
Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall.

*Castle of Indolence.* ✓

All these are items in the description of a winter evening which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident that most of these delicacies, like ice-cream, require a very low temperature of the atmosphere to produce them: they are fruits which cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement, in some way or other. I am not "*particular*," as people say, whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong that (as Mr. ———<sup>33</sup> says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided that it rains cats and dogs; but something of the sort I must have; and if I have not, I think myself in a manner ill used: for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter, in coals, and candles, and various privations that will occur even to gentlemen, if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No: a Canadian winter, for my money; or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own

ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter, that I cannot relish a winter night fully, if it be much past St. Thomas' day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies to vernal appearances; — no, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. From the latter weeks of October to Christmas-eve, therefore, is the period during which happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray; for tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally of coarse nerves, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favorite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person who should presume to disparage it. But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but, as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required except for the inside of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve and not more than seven and a half feet high. This reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family the drawing-room; but being contrived “a double debt to pay,” it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbors. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books

end, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one, such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot,—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*; for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's self, paint me a lovely young woman, sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's;—but no, dear M., not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty; or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself,—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his “little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug” lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that*, though I would rather see the original; you may paint it, if you choose; but I apprise you that no “little” receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the “stately Pantheon;” and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No: you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-colored audanum; that, and a book of German metaphysics



placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighborhood; but as to myself, there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture; that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable; but why should I confess, on this point, to a painter? or, why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into any painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself of the Opium-eater's exterior, — should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person, or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion, — pleasing both to the public and to me? No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and, as a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition, as it stood about '816—'817, up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man; and the elements of that happiness I have endeavored to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, — in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening.

But now farewell, a long farewell, to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind! farewell to hope and to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these; I am now arrived at an *liad* of woes: for I have now to record



## THE PAINS OF OPIUM.

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————— as when some great painter dips  
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.  
*Shelley's Revolt of Islam.*

READER, who have thus far accompanied me, I must request your attention to a brief explanatory note on three points :

1. For several reasons, I have not been able to compose the notes for this part of my narrative into any regular and connected shape. I give the notes disjointed as I find them, or have now drawn them up from memory. Some of them point to their own date; some I have dated; and some are undated. Whenever it could answer my purpose to transplant them from the natural or chronological order, I have not scrupled to do so. Sometimes I speak in the present, sometimes in the past tense. Few of the notes, perhaps, were written exactly at the period of time to which they relate; but this can little affect their accuracy, as the impressions were such that they can never fade from my mind. Much has been omitted. I could not, without effort, constrain myself to the task of either recalling, or constructing into a regular narrative, the

whole burden of horrors which lies upon my brain. This feeling, partly, I plead in excuse, and partly that I am now in London, and am a helpless sort of person who cannot even arrange his own papers without assistance; and I am separated from the hands which are wont to perform for me the offices of an amanuensis.

2. You will think, perhaps, that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud, and follow my own humors, than much to consider who is listening to me; and, if I stop to consider what is proper to be said to this or that person, I shall soon come to doubt whether any part at all is proper. The fact is, I place myself at a distance of fifteen or twenty years ahead of this time, and suppose myself writing to those who will be interested about me hereafter; and wishing to have some record of a time, the entire history of which no one can know but myself, I do it as fully as I am able with the efforts I am now capable of making, because I know not whether I can ever find time to do it again.<sup>34</sup>

3. It will occur to you often to ask, Why did I not release myself from the horrors of opium, by leaving it off, or diminishing it? To this I must answer briefly; might be supposed that I yielded to the fascinations of opium too easily; it cannot be supposed that any man can be charmed by its terrors. The reader may be sure, therefore, that I made attempts innumerable to reduce the quantity. I add, that those who witnessed the agencies of those attempts, and not myself, were the first to beg me to desist. But could not I have reduced

it a drop a day, or, by adding water, have bisected or trisected a drop? A thousand drops bisected would thus have taken nearly six years to reduce; and that they would certainly not have answered. But this is a common mistake of those who know nothing of opium experimentally; I appeal to those who do, whether it is not always found that down to a certain point it can be reduced with ease, and even pleasure, but that, after that point, further reduction causes intense suffering. Yes, say many thoughtless persons, who know not what they are talking of, you will suffer a little low spirits and dejection, for a few days. I answer, no; there is nothing like low spirits; on the contrary, the mere animal spirits are uncommonly raised; the pulse is improved; the health is better. It is not there that the suffering lies. It has no resemblance to the sufferings caused by renouncing wine. It is a state of unutterable irritation of stomach (which surely is not much like dejection), accompanied by intense perspirations, and feelings such as I shall not attempt to describe without more space at my command.

I shall now enter "*in medias res*," and shall anticipate, from a time when my opium pains might be said to be at their *acmè*, an account of their palsyng effects on the intellectual faculties.

My studies have now been long interrupted. I can not read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I read aloud sometimes for the pleasure of others; because reading is an accomplishment of mine, and, in the slang use of the word *accomplishment* as a superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess; and formerly it

had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this; for I had observed that no accomplishment was so rare. Players are the worst readers of all: — reads vilely;<sup>35</sup> and Mrs. —, who is so celebrated, can read nothing well but dramatic compositions; Milton she cannot read sufferably. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature, and read not like scholars. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of Samson Agonistes, or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in Paradise Regained, when read aloud by myself. A young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us; at her request and M.'s, I now and then read W——'s poems to them. (W.,<sup>36</sup> by the by, is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses; often, indeed, he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read no book but one; and I owe it to the author, in discharge of a great debt of gratitude, to mention what that was. The sublimer and more passionate poets I still read, as I have said, by snatches, and occasionally. But my proper vocation, as I well knew, was the exercise of the analytic understanding. Now, for the most part, analytic studies are continuous, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. Mathematics for instance, intellectual philosophy, &c., were all become insupportable to me; I shrunk from them with a sense of powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight and for this further reason, because I had devoted the

labor of my whole life, and had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinoza's, namely, *De Emendatione Humani Intellectûs*. This was now lying locked up as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct, begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect; and, instead of surviving me as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and a life of labor dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure, of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility, I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy; my understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a hyena, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all), sink into utter lethargy; and political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state, that though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again reacts on each part), yet the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of the utter feebleness of the main herd of modern economists. I had been led in 1811 to look into roads of

books and pamphlets on many branches of economy; and, at my desire, M. sometimes read to me chapters from more recent works, or parts of parliamentary debates. I saw that these were generally the very dregs and rinsings of the human intellect; and that any man of sound head, and practised in wielding logic with scholastic adroitness, might take up the whole academy of modern economists, and throttle them between heaven and earth with his finger and thumb, or bray their fungous heads to powder with a lady's fan. At length, in 1819, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr Ricardo's book; and, recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of the advent of some legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, "Thou art the man!" Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more: I wondered at myself that I could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading; and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written in England during the nineteenth century? Was it possible? I supposed thinking\* had been extinct in England. Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed even to advance by one

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\* The reader must remember what I here mean by *thinking*; because, else, this would be a very presumptuous expression. England, of late, has been rich to excess in fine thinkers, in the departments of creative and combining thought; but there is a sad dearth of masculine thinkers in any analytic path. A Scotchman of eminent name has lately told us, that he is obliged to quit even mathematics for want of encouragement.

air's breadth? All other writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weights of facts and documents; Mr. Ricardo had deduced, *à priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first gave a ray of light into the unwieldy chaos of materials, and had constructed what had been but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing on an eternal basis.

Thus did one simple work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years;—it roused me even to write, or, at least, to dictate what M. wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even “the inevitable eye” of Mr. Ricardo; and, as these were, for the most part, of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them more briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols than in the usual clumsy and loitering diction of economists, the whole would not have filled a pocket-book; and being so brief, with M. for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up my *Prolegomena to all Future Systems of Political Economy*. I hope it will not be found redolent of opium; though, indeed, to most people, the subject itself is a sufficient opiate.

This exertion, however, was but a temporary flash, as the sequel showed; for I designed to publish my work. Arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained for some days, on this account. The work was even twice advertised; and was, in a manner, pledged to the fulfilment of my

intention. But I had a preface to write; and a dedication, which I wished to make a splendid one, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded, the compositor dismissed, and my "prolegomena" rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

I have thus described and illustrated my intellectual torpor, in terms that apply, more or less, to every part of the four years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might, indeed, be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter; an answer of a few words, to any that I received, was the utmost that I could accomplish; and often *that* not until the letter had lain weeks, or even months, on my writing-table. Without the aid of M., all records of bills paid, or *to be* paid, must have perished; and my whole domestic economy, whatever became of Political Economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion. I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case; it is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, as oppressive and tormenting as any other, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate duties, and from the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a reflective and conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations; he wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realize what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension



of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of power to attempt. He lies under the weight of incubus and night-mare; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of a relaxing disease, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love:— he curses the spells which chain him down from motion; he would lay down his life if he might but get up and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot even attempt to rise.

I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter confessions, to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy, was from the reawaking of a state of eye generally incident to childhood, or exalted states of irritability. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children, perhaps most, have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness, all sorts of phantoms: in some that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or summon them; or, as a child once said to me, when I questioned him on this matter, “I can tell them to go, and they go; but sometimes they come when I don’t tell them to come.” Whereupon I told him that he had almost as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers. In the middle of 1817, I think it was that this faculty became positively distressing to me: at night, when I

ay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as if they were stories drawn from times before Œdipus or Priam, before Tyre, before Memphis. And, at the same time, a corresponding change took place in my dreams; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented, nightly, spectacles of more than earthly splendor. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time :

I. That, as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point, — that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams; so that I feared to exercise this faculty; for, as Midas turned all things to gold, that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms of the eye; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colors, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendor that fretted my heart.

II. For this, and all other changes in my dreams, were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend — not metaphorically, but literally to descend — into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it

seemed hopeless that I could ever reäscend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* reäscended. This I do not dwell upon; because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at least to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

III. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time. I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or one hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium, passed in that time, or, however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

IV. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognized* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life, in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the

whole and every part.<sup>37</sup> This, from some opium experiences of mine, I can believe; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true, namely, that the dread book of account, which the Scriptures speak of, is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind. Accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains forever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil; and that they are waiting to be revealed, when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a case illustrative of the first fact; and shall then cite any others that I remember, either in their chronological order, or any other that may give them more effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and even since, for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom I confess that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman historians; and I had often felt as most solemn and appalling sounds, and most emphatically representative of the majesty of the Roman people, the two words so often occurring in Livy — *Consul Romanus*; especially when the consul is introduced in his

military character. I mean to say, that the words king, sultan, regent, &c., or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had, also, though no great reader of history, made myself minutely and critically familiar with one period of English history, namely, the period of the Parliamentary War, having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the many interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnish me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness, a sort of rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, "These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and daughters of those who met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood; and yet, after a certain day in August, 1642,<sup>83</sup> never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by the cruel sabre, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship." The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as the court of George IV. Yet I knew, even in my dream, that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant would suddenly dissolve; and, at a clapping of hands would be heard the heart-quaking sound of *Consul Romanus*; and immediately came "sweeping by," in gorgeous paludaments, Parlux

or Marius, girt around by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos* of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's *Antiquities of Rome*, Mr. Coleridge, who was standing by, described to me a set of plates by that artist, called his *Dreams*, and which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever. Some of them (I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, &c., expressive of enormous power put forth, and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself. Follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it to come to a sudden, abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who had reached the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose, at least, that his labors must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher; on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and a still more ærial flight of stairs is beheld; and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labors; and so on, until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall. With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of my malady, the splendors of my dreams were indeed

chiefly architectural; and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds. From a great modern poet.<sup>39</sup> I cite the part of a passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep:

The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,  
 Was of a mighty city—boldly say  
 A wilderness of building, sinking far  
 And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,  
 Far sinking into splendor—without end!  
 Fabric it seemed of diamond, and of gold,  
 With alabaster domes and silver spires,  
 And blazing terrace upon terrace, high  
 Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,  
 In avenues disposed; there towers begirt  
 With battlements that on their restless fronts  
 Bore stars—illumination of all gems!  
 By earthly nature had the effect been wrought  
 Upon the dark materials of the storm  
 Now pacified; on them, and on the coves,  
 And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto  
 The vapors had receded—taking there  
 Their station under a cerulean sky, &c. &c.

The sublime circumstance—"battlements that on their *restless* fronts bore stars"—might have been copied from my architectural dreams, for it often occurred. We hear it reported of Dryden, and of Fuseli in modern times, that they thought proper to eat raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams: how much better, for such a purpose, to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell; and in ancient days, Homer is, I think, rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes, and silvery expanses of water: these haunted me so much, that I feared (though possibly it will appear ludicrous to a medical man) that some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective*, and the sentient organ *project* itself as its own object. For two months I suffered greatly in my head—a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear from all touch or taint of weakness (physically, I mean), that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person. Till now I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly. However, I got over this attack, though it must have been verging on something very dangerous.

The waters now changed their character,—from translucent lakes, shining like mirrors, they now became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment; and, in fact, it never left me until the winding up of my case. Hitherto the human face had often mixed in my dreams, but not despotically, nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that which I have called the tyranny of the human face, began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces



imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: my agitation was infinite, my mind tossed, and surged with the ocean.

*May, 1818.* — The Malay had been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, &c. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, &c., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges, or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings, that

Southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence, and want of sympathy, placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyze. I could sooner live with lunatics, or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say, or have time to say, the reader must enter into, before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of oriental imagery, and mythological tortures, impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms: I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brahma through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me. Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the **bis** and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried, for

thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles; and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed, for a while, in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only, it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case, almost, in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses with cane tables, &c. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the **very same way**: I heard gentle voices speaking to me

(I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke: it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside; come to show me their colored shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that, in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind, I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

✓ *June, 1819.*—I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is (*cæteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, massed, and accumulated in far grander and more towering piles: secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite: and, thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed, generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutua

repression, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic varieties, which often suddenly reunited, and composed again the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnized by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green church-yard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer, when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said aloud (as I thought) to myself, "It yet wants much of sunrise and

it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first fruits of resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day; for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the forest glades are as quiet as the church-yard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead, and then I shall be unhappy no longer." And I turned, as if to open my garden gate; and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony with the other. The scene was an oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city — an image or faint abstraction, caught, perhaps, in childhood, from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, and shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was — Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly; and I said to her, at length, "So, then, I have found you, at last." I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last, and yet, again, how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears; — her tears were now wiped away; she seemed more beautiful than she was at that time, but in all other points the same, and not older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe; but suddenly her countenance grew dim, and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapors rolling between

as; in a moment, all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in Oxford-street, walking again with Ann — just as we walked seventeen years before, when we were both children.

As a final specimen, I cite one of a different character, from 1820.

The dream commenced with a music which now I often heard in dreams — a music of preparation and of awakening suspense; a music like the opening of the Coronation Anthem, and which, like *that*, gave the feeling of a vast march, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day — a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and laboring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where — somehow, I knew not how — by some beings, I knew not whom — a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting, — was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music; with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself, to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. “Deeper than ever plummet sounded,” I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake; some mightier cause than ever yet the word had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then



came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives. I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me, and but a moment allowed, — and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and then — everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of death, the sound was reverberated — everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated — everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud — “I will sleep no more!”

But I am now called upon to wind up a narrative which has already extended to an unreasonable length. Within more spacious limits, the materials which I have used might have been better unfolded; and much which I have not used might have been added with effect. Perhaps, however, enough has been given. It now remains that I should say something of the way in which this conflict of horrors was finally brought to its crisis. The reader is already aware (from a passage near the beginning of the introduction to the first part) that the opium-eater has, in some way or other, “unwound, almost to its final links, the accursed chain which bound him.” By what means? To have narrated this, according to the original intention, would have far exceeded the space which can now be allowed. It is fortunate, as such a cogent reason exists for abridging it, that I should, on a maturer view of the case, have been exceedingly unwilling to injure, by any such unaf-



fecting details, the impression of the history itself, as an appeal to the prudence and the conscience of the yet unconfirmed opium-eater, or even (though a very inferior consideration) to injure its effect as a composition. The interest of the judicious reader will not attach itself chiefly to the subject of the fascinating spells, but to the fascinating power. Not the opium-eater, but the opium, is the true hero of the tale, and the legitimate centre on which the interest revolves. The object was to display the marvellous agency of opium, whether for pleasure or for pain; if that is done, the action of the piece has closed.

However, as some people, in spite of all laws to the contrary, will persist in asking what became of the opium-eater, and in what state he now is, I answer for him thus: The reader is aware that opium had long ceased to found its empire on spells of pleasure; it was solely by the tortures connected with the attempt to abjure it, that it kept its hold. Yet, as other tortures, no less, it may be thought, attended the non-abjuration of such a tyrant, a choice only of evils was left; and *that* might as well have been adopted, which, however terrific in itself, held out a prospect of final restoration to happiness. This appears true; but good logic gave the author no strength to act upon it. However, a crisis arrived for the author's life, and a crisis for other objects still dearer to him, and which will always be far dearer to him than his life, even now that it is again a happy one. I saw that I must die, if I continued the opium: I determined, therefore, if that should be required, to die in throwing it off. How much I was at that time taking, I cannot say; for the

opium which I used had been purchased for me by a friend, who afterwards refused to let me pay him; so that I could not ascertain even what quantity I had used within a year. I apprehend, however, that I took it very irregularly, and that I varied from about fifty or sixty grains to one hundred and fifty a day. My first task was to reduce it to forty, to thirty, and, as fast as I could, to twelve grains.

I triumphed; but think not, reader, that therefore my sufferings were ended; nor think of me as of one sitting in a *dejected* state. Think of me as of one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered; and much, perhaps, in the situation of him who has been racked, as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by the most innocent sufferer\* (of the time of James I.). Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine, except one prescribed to me by an Edinburgh surgeon of great eminence, namely, ammoniated tincture of valerian. Medical account, therefore, of my emancipation, I have not much to give; and even that little, as managed by a man so ignorant of medicine as myself, would probably tend only to mislead. At all events, it would be misplaced in this situation. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater; and therefore, of necessity, limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he may say, that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after a seven-

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\* William Lithgow; his book (Travels, &c.) is ill and pedantically written; but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga is overpoweringly affecting.

teen years' use, and an eight years' abuse of its powers, may still be renounced; and that he may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that, with a stronger constitution than mine, he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true; I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own. I heartily wish him more energy; I wish him the same success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want; and these supplied me with conscientious supports, which mere personal interests might fail to supply to a mind debilitated by opium.

Jeremy Taylor<sup>40</sup> conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die. I think it probable; and, during the whole period of diminishing the opium, I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration, and, I may add, that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits, though under the pressure of difficulties, which, in a less happy state of mind, I should have called misfortunes.

One memorial of my former condition still remains; my dreams are not yet perfectly calm; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not all departed; my sleep is tumultuous, and like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton) —

With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms



**APPENDIX.**



## APPENDIX.

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THE proprietors of this little work having determined on reprinting it, some explanation seems called for, to account for the non-appearance of a Third Part, promised in the London Magazine of December last; and the more so, because the proprietors, under whose guarantee that promise was issued, might otherwise be implicated in the blame—little or much—attached to its non-fulfilment. This blame, in mere justice, the author takes wholly upon himself. What may be the exact amount of the guilt which he thus appropriates, is a very dark question to his own judgment, and not much illuminated by any of the masters on casuistry whom he has consulted on the occasion. On the one hand, it seems generally agreed that a promise is binding in the *inverse* ratio of the numbers to whom it is made: for which reason it is that we see many persons break promises without scruple that are made to a whole nation, who keep their faith religiously in all private engagements,—breaches of promise towards the stronger party being committed at a man's own peril. On the other hand, the only parties interested in the promises of an author are his readers, and these it is a

point of modesty in any author to believe as few as possible; or perhaps only one, in which case any promise imposes a sanctity of moral obligation which it is shocking to think of. Casuistry dismissed, however, — the author throws himself on the indulgent consideration of all who may conceive themselves aggrieved by his delay, in the following account of his own condition from the end of last year, when the engagement was made, up nearly to the present time. For any purpose of self-excuse, it might be sufficient to say, that intolerable bodily suffering had totally disabled him for almost any exertion of mind, more especially for such as demand and presuppose a pleasurable and a genial state of feeling; but, as a case that may by possibility contribute a trifle to the medical history of opium in a further stage of its action than can often have been brought under the notice of professional men, he has judged that it might be acceptable to some readers to have it described more at length. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* is a just rule where there is any reasonable presumption of benefit to arise on a large scale. What the benefit may be, will admit of a doubt; but there can be none as to the value of the body, for a more worthless body than his own, the author is free to confess, cannot be. It is his pride to believe, that it is the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system, that hardly ever could have been meant to be seaworthy for two days under the ordinary storms and wear-and-tear of life. and, indeed, if that were the creditable way of disposing of human bodies, he must own that he should almost be ashamed to bequeath his wretched structure to any respectable dog. But now to the case, which, for the



sake of avoiding the constant recurrence of a cumbersome periphrasis, the author will take the liberty of giving in the first person.

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Those who have read the Confessions will have closed them with the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of opium. This impression I meant to convey, and that for two reasons: first, because the very act of deliberately recording such a state of suffering necessarily presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it, which it would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer; secondly, because I, who had descended from so large a quantity as eight thousand drops to so small a one (comparatively speaking) as a quantity ranging between three hundred and one hundred and sixty drops, might well suppose that the victory was in effect achieved. In suffering my readers, therefore, to think of me as of a reformed opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself, and, as may be seen, even this impression was left to be collected from the general tone of the conclusion, and not from any specific words, which are in no instance at variance with the literal truth. In no long time after that paper was written, I became sensible that the effort which remained would cost me far more energy than I had anticipated, and the necessity for making it was more apparent every month

In particular, I became aware of an increasing callousness or defect of sensibility in the stomach: and this I imagined might imply a schirrous state of that organ either formed or forming. An eminent physician to whose kindness I was, at that time, deeply indebted, informed me that such a termination of my case was not impossible, though likely to be forestalled by a different termination, in the event of my continuing the use of opium. Opium, therefore, I resolved wholly to abjure as soon as I should find myself at liberty to bend my undivided attention and energy to this purpose. It was not, however, until the 24th of June last that any tolerable concurrence of facilities for such an attempt arrived. On that day I began my experiment, having previously settled in my own mind that I would not flinch, but would "stand up to the scratch," under any possible "punishment." I must premise, that about one hundred and seventy or one hundred and eighty drops had been my ordinary allowance for many months. Occasionally I had run up as high as five hundred, and once nearly to seven hundred. In repeated preludes to my final experiment I had also gone as low as one hundred drops, but had found it impossible to stand it beyond the fourth day, which, by the way, I have always found more difficult to get over than any of the preceding three. I went off under easy sail—one hundred and thirty drops a day for three days; on the fourth I plunged at once to eighty. The misery which I now suffered "took the conceit" out of me, at once; and for about a month I continued off and on about this mark; then I sunk to sixty, and the next day to—none at all. This was the first

day for nearly ten years that I had existed without opium. I persevered in my abstinence for ninety hours; that is, upwards of half a week. Then I took — ask me not how much; say, ye severest, what would ye have done? Then I abstained again; then took about twenty-five drops; then abstained; and so on.

Meantime, the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of the experiment were these: enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system; the stomach, in particular, restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility, but often in great pain; unceasing restlessness night and day; sleep — I scarcely knew what it was — three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me; lower jaw constantly swelling; mouth ulcerated; and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat, amongst which, however, I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium, — namely, violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome; sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a day. I was not much surprised at this, on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read, that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach; whence, I believe, are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram-drinkers. The sudden restoration of its original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable, also, that, during the whole period of years

through which I had taken opium, I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to —, I find these words:—“ You ask me to write the ———. Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher’s play of Thierry and Theodoret? There you will see my case as to sleep; nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features. I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years by opium had now, according to the old fable, been thawed at once, such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability, that, for one which I detain and write down, fifty escape me. In spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. *‘I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.’*”

At this stage of my experiment I sent to a neighboring surgeon, requesting that he would come over to see me. In the evening he came, and after briefly stating the case to him, I asked this question: Whether he did not think that the opium might have acted as a stimulus to the digestive organs; and that the present state of suffering in the stomach, which manifestly was the cause of the inability to sleep, might arise from indigestion? His answer was,—No: on the contrary he thought that the suffering was caused by digestion itself, which should naturally go on below the con

sciousness, but which, from the unnatural state of the stomach, vitiated by so long a use of opium, was become distinctly perceptible. This opinion was plausible, and the unintermitting nature of the suffering disposes me to think that it was true; for, if it had been any mere *irregular* affection of the stomach, it should naturally have intermitted occasionally, and constantly fluctuated as to degree. The intention of nature, as manifested in the healthy state, obviously is, to withdraw from our notice all the vital motions, such as the circulation of the blood, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the peristaltic action of the stomach, &c.; and opium, it seems, is able in this, as in other instances, to counteract her purposes. By the advice of the surgeon, I tried *bitters*. For a short time these greatly mitigated the feelings under which I labored; but about the forty-second day of the experiment the symptoms already noticed began to retire, and new ones to arise of a different and far more tormenting class; under these, with but a few intervals of remission, I have since continued to suffer. But I dismiss them undescribed for two reasons: first, because the mind revolts from retracing circumstantially any sufferings from which it is removed by too short or by no interval. To do this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use, would be indeed "*infandum renovare dolorem,*" and possibly without a sufficient motive: for, 2dly, I doubt whether this latter state be any way referable to opium, positively considered, or even negatively; that is, whether it is to be numbered amongst the last evils from the direct action of opium, or even amongst the earliest evils consequent upon a

want of opium in a system long deranged by its use. Certainly one part of the symptoms might be accounted for from the time of year (August); for though the summer was not a hot one, yet in any case the sum of all the heat *funded* (if one may say so) during the previous months, added to the existing heat of that month, naturally renders August in its better half the hottest part of the year; and it so happened that the excessive perspiration, which even at Christmas attends any great reduction in the daily quantum of opium, and which in July was so violent as to oblige me to use a bath five or six times a day, had about the setting in of the hottest season wholly retired, on which account any bad effect of the heat might be the more unmitigated. Another symptom, namely, what in my ignorance I call internal rheumatism (sometimes affecting the shoulders, &c., but more often appearing to be seated in the stomach), seemed again less probably attributable to the opium, or the want of opium, than to the dampness of the house\* which I inhabit, which had about that time attained its maximum, July having been, as usual, a month of incessant rain in our most rainy part of England.

Under these reasons for doubting whether opium had any connection with the latter stage of my bodily

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\* In saying this, I meant no disrespect to the individual house, as the reader will understand when I tell him that, with the exception of one or two princely mansions, and some few inferior ones that have been coated with Roman cement, I am not acquainted with any house in this mountainous district which is wholly water-proof. The architecture of books, I flatter myself, is conducted on just principles in this country; but for any other architecture, it is in a barbarous state, and, what is worse, in a retrograde state

wretchedness — (except, indeed, as an occasional cause, as having left the body weaker and more crazy, and thus predisposed to any mal-influence whatever), — I willingly spare my reader all description of it : let it perish to him ; and would that I could as easily say, let it perish to my own remembrances, that any future hours of tranquillity may not be disturbed by too vivid an ideal of possible human misery !

So much for the sequel of my experiment ; as to the former stage, in which properly lies the experiment and its application to other cases, I must request my reader not to forget the reasons for which I have recorded it. These were two. 1st, a belief that I might add some trifle to the history of opium as a medical agent ; in this I am aware that I have not at all fulfilled my own intentions, in consequence of the torpor of mind, pain of body, and extreme disgust to the subject, which besieged me whilst writing that part of my paper ; which part being immediately sent off to the press (distant about five degrees of latitude), cannot be corrected or improved. But from this account, rambling as it may be, it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium, — namely, to opium-eaters in general, — that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced, and without greater sufferings than an ordinary resolution may support ; and by a pretty rapid course\* of descent.

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\* On which last notice I would remark that mine was *too* rapid, and the suffering therefore needlessly aggravated ; or rather, perhaps, it was not sufficiently continuous and equably graduated. But, that the reader may judge for himself, and, above all, that

To communicate this result of my experiment, was my foremost purpose. 2dly, as a purpose collateral to

the opium-eater, who is preparing to retire from business, may have every sort of information before him, I subjoin my diary.

FIRST WEEK.		SECOND WEEK.	
Drops of Laud.		Drops of Laud.	
Mond. June 24 . . . . .	130	Mond. July 1 . . . . .	80
" 25 . . . . .	140	" 2 . . . . .	80
" 26 . . . . .	130	" 3 . . . . .	90
" 27 . . . . .	80	" 4 . . . . .	100
" 28 . . . . .	80	" 5 . . . . .	80
" 29 . . . . .	80	" 6 . . . . .	80
" 30 . . . . .	80	" 7 . . . . .	80
THIRD WEEK.		FOURTH WEEK.	
Drops of Laud.		Drops of Laud.	
Mond. July 8 . . . . .	300	Mond. July 15 . . . . .	76
" 9 . . . . .	50	" 16 . . . . .	73½
" 10 )	Hiatus in MS.	" 17 . . . . .	73½
" 11 )		" 18 . . . . .	70
" 12 )		" 19 . . . . .	240
" 13 )		" 20 . . . . .	80
" 14 . . . . .	76	" 21 . . . . .	350
FIFTH WEEK.			
Drops of Laud.			
Mond. July 22 . . . . .	60		
" 23 . . . . .	none		
" 24 . . . . .	none		
" 25 . . . . .	none		
" 26 . . . . .	200		
" 27 . . . . .	none		

What mean these abrupt relapses, the reader will ask, perhaps, to such numbers as 300, 350, &c.? The *impulse* to these relapses was mere infirmity of purpose; the *motive*, where any motive blended with this impulse, was either the principle of "*reculer pour mieux sauter*"—(for under the torpor of a large dose, which lasted for a day or two, a less quantity satisfied the stomach, which, on awaking, found itself partly accustomed to this new ration).—or else it was



th<sup>e</sup> I wished to explain how it had become impossible for me to compose a Third Part in time to accompany this republication: for during the very time of this experiment, the proof-sheets of this reprint were sent to me from London; and such was my inability to expand or to improve them, that I could not even bear to read them over with attention enough to notice the press errors, or to correct any verbal inaccuracies. These were my reasons for troubling my reader with any record, long or short, of experiments relating to so truly base a subject as my own body; and I am earnest with the reader, that he will not forget them, or so far misapprehend me as to believe it possible that I would condescend to so rascally a subject for its own sake, or, indeed, for any less object than that of general benefit to others. Such an animal as the self-observing valetudinarian, I know there is. I have met him myself occasionally, and I know that he is the worst imaginable *heautontimoroumenos*; aggravating and sustaining, by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else, perhaps, under a different direction given to the thoughts, become evanescent. But as to myself, so profound is my contempt for this undignified and selfish habit, that I could as little condescend to it as I could to spend my time in watching a poor servant-girl, to whom at this moment I hear some lad or other making love at the back of my house. Is it for a Transcendental philosopher to feel any curiosity

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this principle — that of sufferings otherwise equal, those will be borne best which meet with a mood of anger; now, whenever ascended to any large dose, I was furiously incensed on the following day, and could then have borne anything.

on such an occasion? Or can I, whose life is worth only eight and a half years' purchase, be supposed to have leisure for such trivial employments? However, to put this out of question, I shall say one thing which will, perhaps, shock some readers; but I am sure it ought not to do so, considering the motives on which I say it. No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the phenomena of his own body without some regard for it; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt; and I should not be displeased to know that the last indignities which the law inflicts upon the bodies of the worst malefactors might hereafter fall upon it. And in testification of my sincerity in saying this, I shall make the following offer. Like other men, I have particular fancies about the place of my burial; having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit that a grave in a green church-yard amongst the ancient and solitary hills will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London. Yet, if the gentlemen of Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redound to their science from inspecting the appearances in the body of an opium-eater, let them speak but a word, and I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them — that is, as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy and consideration for my feelings; I assure them that they will do me too much honor by “demonstrating” on such a crazy body as

mine; and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common; reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the habits of a Roman prince, who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons, that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements, and his gracious acceptance of those royal legacies; but then, if the testators neglected to give him immediate possession of the property, — if they traitorously “persisted in living” (*si vivere perseverarent*, as Suetonius expresses it), he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly. In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct; but I am sure that, from English surgeons at this day, I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science, and all its interests, which induces me to make such an offer.

*Sept. 30th, 1822.*



SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS:

BEING A SEQUEL TO THE

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER



# SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS:

BEING A SEQUEL TO THE

“CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.”

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

IN 1821, as a contribution to a periodical work, — in 1822, as a separate volume, — appeared the “Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.” The object of that work was to reveal something of the grandeur which belongs *potentially* to human dreams. Whatever may be the number of those in whom this faculty of dreaming splendidly can be supposed to lurk, there are not perhaps very many in whom it is developed. He, whose talk is of oxen, will probably dream of oxen, and the condition of human life, which yokes so vast a majority to a daily experience incompatible with much elevation of thought, oftentimes neutralizes the tone of grandeur in the reproductive faculty of dreaming, even for those whose minds are populous with solemn imagery. Habitually to dream magnificently, a man must have a constitutional determination to reverie. This in the first place, and even this, where it exists strongly

is too much liable to disturbance from the gathering agitation of our present English life. Already, in this year 1845, what by the procession through fifty years of mighty revolutions amongst the kingdoms of the earth, what by the continual development of vast physical agencies, — steam in all its applications, light getting under harness as a slave for man,\* powers from heaven descending upon education and accelerations of the press, powers from hell (as it might seem but these also celestial) coming round upon artillery and the forces of destruction, — the eye of the calmest observer is troubled; the brain is haunted as if by some jealousy of ghostly beings moving amongst us and it becomes too evident that, unless this colossal pace of advance can be retarded (a thing not to be expected), or, which is happily more probable, can be met by counter forces of corresponding magnitude, forces in the direction of religion or profound philosophy, that shall radiate centrifugally against this storm of life so perilously centripetal towards the vortex of the merely human, left to itself, the natural tendency of so chaotic a tumult must be to evil; for some minds to lunacy, ✓ for others to a reägency of fleshly torpor. ✓ How much this fierce condition of eternal hurry upon an arena too exclusively human in its interests is likely to defeat the grandeur which is latent in all men, may be seen in the ordinary effect from living too constantly in varied company. The word *dissipation*, in one of its uses, expresses that effect; the action of thought and feeling is too much dissipated and squandered. Tc

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\* Daguerreotype, &c.



reconcentrate them into meditative habits, a necessity is felt by all observing persons for sometimes retiring from crowds. No man ever will unfold the capacities of his own intellect who does not at least checker his life with solitude. How much solitude, so much power. Or, if not true in that rigor of expression, to this formula undoubtedly it is that the wise rule of life must approximate.

Among the powers in man which suffer by this too intense life of the *social* instincts, none suffers more than the power of dreaming. Let no man think this a trifle. The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connection with the heart, the eye and the ear, compose the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.

But if this faculty suffers from the decay of solitude, which is becoming a visionary idea in England, on the other hand, it is certain that some merely physical agencies can and do assist the faculty of dreaming almost preternaturally. Amongst these is intense exercise; to some extent at least, and for some persons; but beyond all others is opium, which indeed seems to possess a *specific* power in that direction; not merely for exalting the colors of dream-scenery, but for deepening its shadows, and, above all, for strengthening the sense of its fearful realities.

The *Opium Confessions* were written with some slight secondary purpose of exposing this specific power of opium upon the faculty of dreaming, but much more with the purpose of displaying the faculty itself; and the outline of the work travelled in this course. Supposing a reader acquainted with the true object of the Confessions as here stated, namely, the revelation of dreaming to have put this question :

“But how came you to dream more splendidly than others?”

The answer would have been —

“Because (*præmissis præmittendis*) I took excessive quantities of opium.”

Secondly, suppose him to say, “But how came you to take opium in this excess?”

The answer to *that* would be, “Because some early events in my life had left a weakness in one organ which required (or seemed to require) that stimulant.”

Then, because the opium dreams could not always have been understood without a knowledge of these events, it became necessary to relate them. Now, these two questions and answers exhibit the *law* of the work; that is, the principle which determined its form, but precisely in the inverse or regressive order. The work itself opened with the narration of my early adventures. These, in the natural order of succession, led to the opium as a resource for healing their consequences; and the opium as naturally led to the dreams. But in the synthetic order of presenting the facts, what stood last in the succession of development stood first in the order of my purposes.

At the close of this little work, the reader was instructed to believe, and *truly* instructed, that I had mastered the tyranny of opium. The fact is, that *twice* I mastered it, and by efforts even more prodigious in the second of these cases than in the first. But one error I committed in both. I did not connect with the abstinence from opium, so trying to the fortitude under *any* circumstances, that enormity of excess which (as I have since learned) is the one sole resource for making it endurable. I overlooked, in those days, the one *sine quâ non* for making the triumph permanent. Twice I sank, twice I rose again. A third time I sank; partly from the cause mentioned (the oversight as to exercise), partly from other causes, on which it avails not now to trouble the reader. I could moralize, if I chose; and perhaps *he* will moralize, whether I choose it or not. But, in the mean time, neither of us is acquainted properly with the circumstances of the case: I, from natural bias of judgment, not altogether acquainted; and he (with his permission) not at all.

During this third prostration before the dark idol, and after some years, new and monstrous phenomena began slowly to arise. For a time, these were neglected as accidents, or palliated by such remedies as I knew of. But when I could no longer conceal from myself that these dreadful symptoms were moving forward forever, by a pace steadily, solemnly, and equably increasing, I endeavored, with some feeling of panic, for a third time to retrace my steps. But I had not reversed my motions for many weeks, before I became profoundly aware that this was im-

possible. On in the imagery of my dreams, which translated everything into their own language, I saw through vast avenues of gloom those towering gates of ingress which hitherto had always seemed to stand open, now at last barred against my retreat, and hung with funeral crape.

As applicable to this tremendous situation (the situation of one escaping by some reflux current from the maelstrom roaring for him in the distance, who finds suddenly that this current is but an eddy, wheeling round upon the same maelstrom), I have since remembered a striking incident in a modern novel. A lady abbess of a convent, herself suspected of Protestant leanings, and in that way already disarmed of all effectual power, finds one of her own nuns (whom she knows to be innocent) accused of an offence leading to the most terrific of punishments. The nun will be immured alive, if she is found guilty; and there is no chance that she will not, for the evidence against her is strong, unless something were made known that cannot be made known; and the judges are hostile. All follows in the order of the reader's fears. The witnesses depose; the evidence is without effectual contradiction; the conviction is declared; the judgment is delivered; nothing remains but to see execution done. At this crisis, the abbess, alarmed too late for effectual interposition, considers with herself that, according to the regular forms, there will be one single night open, during which the prisoner cannot be withdrawn from her own separate jurisdiction. This one night, therefore, she will use, at any hazard to herself, for the salvation of her friend. At midnight, when all is hushed in the

convent, the lady traverses the passages which lead to the cells of prisoners. She bears a master-key under her professional habit. As this will open every door in every corridor, already, by anticipation, she feels the luxury of holding her emancipated friend within her arms. Suddenly she has reached the door; she descries a dusky object; she raises her lamp, and, ranged within the recess of the entrance, she beholds the funeral banner of the holy office, and the black robes of its inexorable officials.

I apprehend that, in a situation such as this, supposing it a real one, the lady abbess would not start, would not show any marks externally of consternation or horror. The case was beyond *that*. The sentiment which attends the sudden revelation that *all is lost* silently is gathered up into the heart; it is too deep for gestures or for words; and no part of it passes to the outside. Were the ruin conditional, or were it in any point doubtful, it would be natural to utter ejaculations, and to seek sympathy. But where the ruin is understood to be absolute, where sympathy cannot be consolation, and counsel cannot be hope, this is otherwise. The voice perishes; the gestures are frozen; and the spirit of man flies back upon its own centre. I, at least, upon seeing those awful gates closed and hung with draperies of woe, as for a death already past, spoke not, nor started, nor groaned. One profound sigh ascended from my heart, and I was silent for days.

It is the record of this third or final stage of opium, as one differing in something more than degree from the others, that I am now undertaking. But a scruple

arises as to the true interpretation of these final symptoms. I have elsewhere explained, that it was no particular purpose of mine, and *why* it was no particular purpose, to warn other opium-eaters. Still, as some few persons may use the record in that way, it becomes a matter of interest to ascertain how far it is likely, that, even with the same excesses, other opium-eaters could fall into the same condition. I do not mean to lay a stress upon any supposed idiosyncrasy in myself. Possibly every man has an idiosyncrasy. In some things, undoubtedly, he has. For no man ever yet resembled another man so far, as not to differ from him in features innumerable of his inner nature. But what I point to are not peculiarities of temperament or of organization, so much as peculiar circumstances and incidents through which my own separate experience had revolved. Some of these were of a nature to alter the whole economy of my mind. Great convulsions, from whatever cause, — from conscience, from fear, from grief, from struggles of the will, — sometimes, in passing away themselves, do not carry off the changes which they have worked. *All* the agitations of this magnitude which a man may have threaded in his life, he neither ought to report, nor *could* report. But one which affected my childhood is a privileged exception. It is privileged as a proper communication for a stranger's ear; because, though relating to a man's proper self, it is a self so far removed from his present self as to wound no feelings of delicacy or just reserve. It is privileged, also, as a proper subject for the sympathy of the narrator. An adult sympathizes with himself in childhood:

because he *is* the same, and because (being the same) yet he is *not* the same. He acknowledges the deep, mysterious identity between himself, as adult and as infant, for the ground of his sympathy; and yet, with this general agreement, and necessity of agreement, he feels the differences between his two selves as the main quickeners of his sympathy. He pities the infirmities, as they arise to light in his young forerunner, which now, perhaps, he does not share; he looks indulgently upon the errors of the understanding, or limitations of view which now he has long survived; and sometimes, also, he honors in the infant that rectitude of will which, under *some* temptations, he may since have felt it so difficult to maintain.

The particular case to which I refer in my own childhood was one of intolerable grief; a trial, in fact, more severe than many people at *any* age are called upon to stand. The relation in which the case stands to my latter opium experiences is this:— Those vast clouds of gloomy grandeur which overhung my dreams at all stages of opium, but which grew into the darkest of miseries in the last, and that haunting of the human face, which latterly towered into a curse, — were they not partly derived from this childish experience? It is certain that, from the essential solitude in which my childhood was passed; from the depth of my sensibility; from the exaltation of this by the resistance of an intellect too prematurely developed; it resulted that the terrific grief which I passed through drove a shaft for me into the worlds of death and darkness which never again closed, and through which it might be said that I ascended and descended at will, according to the



temper of my spirits. Some of the phenomena developed in my dream-scenery, undoubtedly, do but repeat the experiences of childhood; and others seem likely to have been growths and fructifications from seeds at that time sown.

The reasons, therefore, for prefixing some account of a "passage" in childhood to this record of a dreadful visitation from opium excess are, 1st, That, in coloring, it harmonizes with that record, and, therefore, is related to it at least in point of feeling; 2dly, That, possibly, it was in part the origin of some features in that record, and so far is related to it in logic; 3dly, That, the final assault of opium being of a nature to challenge the attention of medical men, it is important to clear away all doubts and scruples which can gather about the roots of such a malady. Was it opium, or was it opium in combination with something else, that raised these storms?

Some cynical reader will object, that for this last purpose it would have been sufficient to state the fact, without rehearsing *in extenso* the particulars of that case in childhood. But the reader of more kindness (for a surly reader is always a bad critic) will also have more discernment; and he will perceive that it is not for the mere facts that the case is reported, but because these facts move through a wilderness of natural thoughts or feelings: some in the child who suffers, some in the man who reports; but all so far interesting as they relate to solemn objects. Meantime, the objection of the sullen critic reminds me of a scene sometimes beheld at the English lakes. Figure to yourself an energetic tourist, who protests everywhere that he



comes only to see the lakes. He has no business whatever; he is not searching for any recreant indorser of a bill, but simply in search of the picturesque. Yet this man adjures every landlord, "by the virtue of his oath," to tell him, and, as he hopes for peace in this world, to tell him truly, which is the *nearest* road to Keswick. Next, he applies to the postilions, — the Westmoreland postilions always fly down hills at full stretch without locking, — but, nevertheless, in the full career of their fiery race, our picturesque man lets down the glasses, pulls up four horses and two postilions, at the risk of six necks and twenty legs, adjuring them to reveal whether they are taking the *shortest* road. Finally, he descends my unworthy self upon the road; and, instantly stopping his flying equipage, he demands of me (as one whom he believes to be a scholar and a man of honor) whether there is not, in the possibility of things, a *shorter* cut to Keswick. Now, the answer which rises to the lips of landlord, two postilions, and myself, is this: "Most excellent stranger, as you come to the lakes simply to see their loveliness, might it not be as well to ask after the most beautiful road, rather than the shortest? Because, if abstract shortness, if *à* brevity, is your object, then the shortest of all possible tours would seem, with submission, never to have left London." On the same principle, I tell my critic that the whole course of this narrative resembles, and was meant to resemble, a *caduceus* wreathed about with meandering ornaments, or the shaft of a tree's stem hung round and surmounted with some vagrant parasitical plant. The mere medical subject of the opium answers to

the dry, withered pole, which shoots all the rings of the flowering plants, and seems to do so by some dexterity of its own; whereas, in fact, the plant and its tendrils have curled round the sullen cylinder by mere luxuriance of *theirs*. Just as in Cheapside, if you look right and left, the streets so narrow, that lead off at right angles, seem quarried and blasted out of some Babylonian brick-kiln; bored, not raised artificially by the builder's hand. But, if you inquire of the worthy men who live in that neighborhood, you will find it unanimously deposed — that not the streets were quarried out of the bricks, but, on the contrary (most ridiculous as it seems), that the bricks have supervened upon the streets.

The streets did not intrude amongst the bricks, but those cursed bricks came to imprison the streets. So, also, the ugly pole — hop-pole, vine-pole, espalier, no matter what — is there only for support. Not the flowers are for the pole, but the pole is for the flowers. Upon the same analogy, view me as one (in the words of a true and most impassioned poet\*) "*viridantem floribus hastas*" — making verdant, and gay with the life of flowers, murderous spears and halberts — things that express death in their origin (being made from dead substances that once had lived in forests), things that express ruin in their use. The true object in my "Opium Confessions" is not the naked physiological theme, — on the contrary, *that* is the ugly pole, the murderous spear, the halbert, — but those wandering musical variations upon the theme, —

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\* Valerius F. accus.

those parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions, which climb up with bells and blossoms round about the arid stock; ramble away from it at times with perhaps too rank a luxuriance; but at the same time, by the eternal interest attached to the *subjects* of these digressions, no matter what were the execution, spread a glory over incidents that for themselves would be less than nothing.

## PART I.

## THE AFFLICTION OF CHILDHOOD.

IT is so painful to a lover of open-hearted sincerity that any indirect traits of vanity should even *seem* to creep into records of profound passion; and yet, on the other hand, it is so impossible, without an unnatural restraint upon the freedom of the narrative, to prevent oblique gleams reaching the reader from such circumstances of luxury or elegance as did really surround my childhood, that on all accounts I think it better to tell him, from the first, with the simplicity of truth, in what order of society my family moved at the time from which this preliminary narrative is dated. Otherwise it would happen that, merely by moving truly and faithfully through the circumstances of this early experience, I could hardly prevent the reader from receiving an impression as of some higher rank than did really belong to my family. My father was a merchant; not in the sense of Scotland, where it means a man who sells groceries in a cellar, but in the English sense, a sense severely exclusive—namely, he was a man engaged in *foreign* commerce, and no other; therefore, in *wholesale* commerce, and no other, —which last circumstance it is important to mention because it brings him within the benefit of Cicero's

condescending distinction\* — as one to be despised, certainly, but not too intensely to be despised even by a Roman senator. He — this imperfectly despicable man — died at an early age, and very soon after the incidents here recorded, leaving to his family, then consisting of a wife and six children, an unburthened estate producing exactly £1600 a year. Naturally, therefore, at the date of my narrative, — if narrative it can be called, — he had an income still larger, from the addition of current commercial profits. Now, to any man who is acquainted with commercial life, but, above all, with such life in England, it will readily occur that in an opulent English family of that class, — opulent, though not rich in a mercantile estimate, — the domestic economy is likely to be upon a scale of liberality altogether unknown amongst the corresponding orders in foreign nations. Whether as to the establishment of servants, or as to the provision made for the comfort of all its members, such a household not uncommonly eclipses the scale of living even amongst the poorer classes of our nobility, though the most splendid in Europe — a fact which, since the period of my infancy, I have had many personal opportunities for verifying both in England and in Ireland. From this peculiar anomaly, affecting the domestic economy of merchants there arises a disturbance upon the general scale of outward signs by which we measure the relations of rank. The equation, so to speak, between one order

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\*Cicero, in a well-known passage of his *Ethics*, speaks of trade as irredeemably base, if petty; but as not so absolutely felonious, if wholesale. He gives a *real* merchant (one who is such in the English sense) leave to think himself a shade above small beer.

of society and another, which usually travels in the natural line of their comparative expenditure, is here interrupted and defeated, so that one rank would be collected from the name of the occupation, and another rank, much higher, from the splendor of the domestic *ménage*. I warn the reader, therefore (or, rather, my explanation has already warned him), that he is not to infer, from any casual gleam of luxury or elegance, a corresponding elevation of rank.

We, the children of the house, stood in fact upon the very happiest tier in the scaffolding of society for all good influences. The prayer of Agar—"Give me neither poverty nor riches"—was realized for us. That blessing had we, being neither too high nor too low: high enough we were to see models of good manners; obscure enough to be left in the sweetest of solitudes. Amply furnished with the nobler benefits of wealth, *extra* means of health, of intellectual culture, and of elegant enjoyment, on the other hand, we knew nothing of its social distinctions. Not depressed by the consciousness of privations too sordid, not tempted into restlessness by the consciousness of privileges too aspiring, we had no motives for shame, we had none for pride. Grateful also to this hour I am, that, amidst luxuries in all things else, we were trained to a Spartan simplicity of diet,—that we fared, in fact, very much less sumptuously than the servants. And if (after the model of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius) I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as chiefly worthy to be commemorated—that I lived in the country; that I lived in solitude, that my

infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, not by horrid pugilistic brothers; finally, that I and they were dutiful children, of a pure, holy, and magnificent church.

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The earliest incidents in my life which affected me so deeply as to be rememberable at this day were two, and both before I could have completed my second year; namely, a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about a favorite nurse, which is interesting for a reason to be noticed hereafter; and, secondly, the fact of having connected a profound sense of pathos with the reëppearance, very early in the spring, of some crocuses. This I mention as inexplicable, for such annual resurrections of plants and flowers affect us only as memorials, or suggestions of a higher change, and therefore in connection with the idea of death; but of death I could, at that time, have had no experience whatever.

This, however, I was speedily to acquire. My two eldest sisters — eldest of three *then* living, and also elder than myself — were summoned to an early death. The first who died was Jane, about a year older than myself. She was three and a half, I two and a half, *plus* or *minus* some trifle that I do not recollect. But death was then scarcely intelligible to me, and I could not so properly be said to suffer sorrow as a sad perplexity. There was another death in the house about the same time, namely, of a maternal grandmother; but as she had in a manner come to us for the express purpose of dying in her daughter's society, and from illness had lived perfectly secluded, our nursery party

knew her but little, and were certainly more affected by the death (which I witnessed) of a favorite bird, namely, a kingfisher who had been injured by an accident. With my sister Jane's death (though otherwise, as I have said, less sorrowful than unintelligible) there was, however, connected an incident which made a most fearful impression upon myself, deepening my tendencies to thoughtfulness and abstraction beyond what would seem credible for my years. If there was one thing in this world from which, more than from any other, nature had forced me to revolt, it was brutality and violence. Now, a whisper arose in the family that a woman-servant, who by accident was drawn off from her proper duties to attend my sister Jane for a day or two, had on one occasion treated her harshly, if not brutally; and as this ill treatment happened within two days of her death, so that the occasion of it must have been some fretfulness in the poor child caused by her sufferings, naturally there was a sense of awe diffused through the family. I believe the story never reached my mother, and possibly it was exaggerated; but upon me the effect was terrific. I did not often see the person charged with this cruelty; but, when I did, my eyes sought the ground; nor could I have borne to look her in the face—not through anger; and as to vindictive thoughts, how could these lodge in a powerless infant? The feeling which fell upon me was a shuddering awe, as upon a first glimpse of the truth that I was in a world of evil and strife. Though born in a large town, I had passed the whole of my childhood, except for the few earliest weeks, in a rural seclusion. With three innocent little



sisters for playmates, sleeping always amongst them, and shut up forever in a silent garden from all knowledge of poverty, or oppression, or outrage, I had not suspected until this moment the true complexion of the world in which myself and my sisters were living. Henceforward the character of my thoughts must have changed greatly; for so *representative* are some acts, that one single case of the class is sufficient to throw open before you the whole theatre of possibilities in that direction. I never heard that the woman, accused of this cruelty, took it at all to heart, even after the event which so immediately succeeded had reflected upon it a more painful emphasis. On the other hand, I knew of a case, and will pause to mention it, where a mere semblance and shadow of such cruelty, under similar circumstances, inflicted the grief of self-reproach through the remainder of life. A boy, interesting in his appearance, as also from his remarkable docility, was attacked, on a cold day of spring, by a complaint of the trachea — not precisely croup, but like it. He was three years old, and had been ill perhaps for four days; but at intervals had been in high spirits, and capable of playing. This sunshine, gleaming through dark clouds, had continued even on the fourth day; and from nine to eleven o'clock at night he had showed more animated pleasure than ever. An old servant, hearing of his illness, had called to see him; and her mode of talking with him had excited all the joyousness of his nature. About midnight, his mother, fancying that his feet felt cold, was muffling them up in flannels; and, as he seemed to resist her a little, she struck lightly on the sole of one foot as a mode of

admonishing him to be quiet. He did not repeat his motion; and in less than a minute his mother had him in her arms with his face looking upwards. "What is the meaning," she exclaimed, in sudden affright, "of this strange repose settling upon his features?" She called loudly to a servant in another room; but before the servant could reach her, the child had drawn two inspirations, deep, yet gentle — and had died in his mother's arms! Upon this, the poor afflicted lady made the discovery that those struggles, which she had supposed to be expressions of resistance to herself, were the struggles of departing life. It followed, or seemed to follow, that with these final struggles had blended an expression, on *her* part, of displeasure. Doubtless the child had not distinctly perceived it; but the mother could never look back to that incident without self-reproach. And seven years after, when her own death happened, no progress had been made in reconciling her thoughts to that which only the depth of love could have viewed as an offence.

So passed away from earth one out of those sisters that made up my nursery playmates; and so did my acquaintance (if such it could be called) commence with mortality. Yet, in fact, I knew little more of mortality than that Jane had disappeared. She had gone away; but, perhaps, she would come back. Happy interval of heaven-born ignorance! Gracious immunity of infancy from sorrow disproportioned to its strength! I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again — crocuses and roses; why not little Jane?

Thus easily was healed, then, the first wound in my infant heart. Not so the second. For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises upon the darkness, I fancy a *tiara* of light or a gleaming *aureola* in token of thy premature intellectual grandeur, — thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science,\* — thou next, but after an interval of happy years, thou also wert summoned away from our nursery; and the night which, for me, gathered upon that event, ran after my steps far into life; and perhaps at this day I resemble little for good or for ill that which else I should have been. Pillar of fire that didst go before me to guide and to quicken, — pillar of darkness, when thy countenance was turned away to God,

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\* “*The astonishment of science.*” — Her medical attendants were Dr. Percival, a well-known literary physician, who had been a correspondent of Condorcet, D’Alembert, &c., and Mr. Charles White, a very distinguished surgeon. It was he who pronounced her head to be the finest in its structure and development of any that he had ever seen, — an assertion which, to my own knowledge, he repeated in after years, and with enthusiasm. That he had some acquaintance with the subject may be presumed from this, that he wrote and published a work on the human skull, supported by many measurements which he had made of heads selected from all varieties of the human species. Meantime, as I would be loath that any trait of what might seem vanity should creep into this record, I will candidly admit that she died of hydrocephalus; and it has been often supposed that the premature expansion of the intellect in cases of that class is altogether morbid, — forced on, in fact, by the mere stimulation of the disease. I would, however, suggest, as a possibility, the very inverse order of relation between the disease and the intellectual manifestations. Not the disease may always have caused the preternatural growth of the intellect; but, on the contrary, this growth coming on spontaneously and outrunning the capacities of the physical structure, may have caused the disease.

that didst too truly shed the shadow of death over my young heart, — in what scales should I weigh thee? Was the blessing greater from thy heavenly presence, or the blight which followed thy departure? Can a man weigh off and value the glories of dawn against the darkness of hurricane? Or, if he could, how is it that, when a memorable love has been followed by a memorable bereavement, even suppose that God would replace the sufferer in a point of time anterior to the entire experience, and offer to cancel the woe, but so that the sweet face which had caused the woe should also be obliterated, vehemently would every man shrink from the exchange! In the *Paradise Lost*, this strong instinct of man, to prefer the heavenly, mixed and polluted with the earthly, to a level experience offering neither one nor the other, is divinely commemorated. What words of pathos are in that speech of Adam's — "If God should make another Eve," &c.; that is, if God should replace him in his primitive state, and should condescend to bring again a second Eve, one that would listen to no temptation, still that original partner of his earliest solitude —

"Creature in whom excelled  
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,  
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet" —

even now, when she appeared in league with an eternity of woe, and ministering to his ruin, could not be displaced for him by any better or happier Eve. "Loss of thee!" he exclaims, in this anguish of trial —

"Loss of thee  
Would never from my heart; no, no, I feel  
The link of nature draw me; flesh of flesh,

Bone of my bone thou art ; and from thy state  
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe." \*

But what was it that drew my heart, by gravitation so strong, to my sister? Could a child, little above six years of age, place any special value upon her intellectual forwardness? Serene and capacious as her mind appeared to me upon after review, was *that* a charm for stealing away the heart of an infant? O, no! I think of it *now* with interest, because it lends, in a stranger's ear some justification to the excess of my fondness. But then it was lost upon me; or, if not lost, was but dimly perceived. Hadst thou been an idiot, my sister, not the less I must have loved thee, having that capacious heart overflowing, even as mine overflowed, with tenderness, and stung, even as mine was stung, by the necessity of being loved. This it was which crowned thee with beauty —

“ Love, the holy sense,  
Best gift of God, in thee was most intense.”

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\* Amongst the oversights in the *Paradise Lost*, some of which have not yet been perceived, it is certainly *one* — that, by placing in such overpowering light of pathos the sublime sacrifice of Adam to his love for his frail companion, he has too much lowered the guilt of his disobedience to God. All that Milton can say afterwards does not, and cannot, obscure the beauty of that action; reviewing it calmly, we condemn, but taking the impassioned station of Adam at the moment of temptation, we approve in our hearts. This was certainly an oversight; but it was one very difficult to redress. I remember, amongst the many exquisite thoughts of John Paul (Richter), one which strikes me as particularly touching, upon this subject. He suggests, not as any grave theological comment, but as the wandering fancy of a poetic heart, that, had Adam conquered the anguish of separation as a pure sacrifice of obedience to God, his reward would have been the pardon and reconciliation of Eve, together with her restoration to innocence.

That lamp lighted in Paradise was kindled for me which shone so steadily in thee; and never but to thee only, never again since thy departure, *durst* I utter the feelings which possessed me. For I was the shyest of children; and a natural sense of personal dignity held the back at all stages of life, from exposing the least ray of feelings which I was not encouraged *wolly* to reveal.

It would be painful, and it is needless, to pursue the course of that sickness which carried off my leader and companion. She (according to my recollection at this moment) was just as much above eight years as I above six. And perhaps this natural precedency of authority in judgment, and the tender humility with which she declined to assert it, had been amongst the fascinations of her presence. It was upon a Sunday evening, or so people fancied, that the spark of fatal fire fell upon that train of predispositions to a brain complaint which had hitherto slumbered within her. She had been permitted to drink tea at the house of a laboring man, the father of an old female servant. The sun had set when she returned in the company of this servant through meadows reeking with exhalations after a fervent day. From that time she sickened. Happily, a child in such circumstances feels no anxieties. Looking upon medical men as people whose natural commission it is to heal diseases, since it is their natural function to profess it, knowing them only as *ex officio* privileged to make war upon pain and sickness, I never had a misgiving about the result. I grieved, indeed, that my sister should lie in bed, I grieved still more sometimes to hear her moan. But

all this appeared to me no more than a night of trouble, on which the dawn would soon arise. O! moment of darkness and delirium, when a nurse awakened me from that delusion, and launched God's thunderbolt at my heart in the assurance that my sister *must* die. Rightly it is said of utter, utter misery, that it "cannot be remembered."\* Itself, as a remarkable thing, is swallowed up in its own chaos. Mere anarchy and confusion of mind fell upon me. Deaf and blind I was, as I reeled under the revelation. I wish not to recall the circumstances of that time, when *my* agony was at its height, and hers in another sense was approaching. Enough to say, that all was soon over; and the morning of that day had at last arrived which looked down upon her innocent face, sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking, and upon me sorrowing the sorrow for which there is no consolation.

On the day after my sister's death, whilst the sweet temple of her brain was yet unviolated by human scrutiny, I formed my own scheme for seeing her once more. Not for the world would I have made this known, nor have suffered a witness to accompany me. I had never heard of feelings that take the name of "sentimental," nor dreamed of such a possibility. But grief even in a child hates the light, and shrinks from human eyes. The house was large; there were two staircases; and by one of these I knew that about noon, when all would be quiet, I could steal up into her chamber. I imagine that it was exactly high noon

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\* "I stood in unimaginable trance

And agony, which cannot be remembered."

*Speech of Alhadra, in Coleridge's Remorse.*



when I reached the chamber door; it was locked but the key was not taken away. Entering, I closed the door so softly, that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the stories, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then turning round, I sought my sister's face. But the bed had been moved, and the back was now turned. Nothing met my eyes but one large window wide open, through which the sun of midsummer at noonday was showering down torrents of splendor. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed the express types of infinity; and it was not possible for eye to behold or for heart to conceive any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause for one instant in approaching a remembrance so affecting and revolutionary for my own mind, and one which (if any earthly remembrance) will survive for me in the hour of death, — to remind some readers, and to inform others, that in the original *Opium Confessions* I endeavored to explain the reason\* why death, *ceteris paribus*, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year; so far, at least, as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer and the dark sterilities of the grave. The summer we see, the grave we haunt with our thoughts; the glory is around us, the darkness is within us. And the two coming into collision, each exalts the other into stronger relief

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\* Some readers will question the *fact*, and seek no reason. But did they ever suffer grief at *any* season of the year?



But in my case there was even a subtler reason why the summer had this intense power of vivifying the spectacle or the thoughts of death. And, recollecting it, often I have been struck with the important truth, that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involved* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes. It had happened that amongst our nursery collection of books was the Bible illustrated with many pictures. And in long dark evenings, as my three sisters with myself sate by the firelight round the *guard* of our nursery, no book was so much in request amongst us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. One young nurse, whom we all loved, before any candle was lighted, would often strain her eye to read it for us; and, sometimes, according to her simple powers, would endeavor to explain what we found obscure. We, the children, were all constitutionally touched with pensiveness; the fitful gloom and sudden lambencies of the room by firelight suited our evening state of feelings; and they suited, also, the divine revelations of power and mysterious beauty which awed us. Above all, the story of a just man—man and yet *not* man, real above all things, and yet shadowy above all things, who had suffered the passion of death in Palestine—slept upon our minds like early dawn upon the waters. The nurse knew and explained to us the chief differences in oriental climates; and all these differences (as it happens) express themselves in the great vari-

eties of summer. The cloudless sunlights of Syria — those seemed to argue everlasting summer; the disciples plucking the ears of corn — that *must* be summer; but, above all, the very name of Palm Sunday (a festival in the English church) troubled me like an anthem. "Sunday!" what was *that*? That was the day of peace which masked another peace deeper than the heart of man can comprehend. "Palms!" what were they? *That* was an equivocal word; palms, in the sense of trophies, expressed the pomps of life; palms, as a product of nature, expressed the pomps of summer. Yet still even this explanation does not suffice; it was not merely by the peace and by the summer, by the deep sound of rest below all rest, and of ascending glory, that I had been haunted. It was also because Jerusalem stood near to those deep images both in time and in place. The great event of Jerusalem was at hand when Palm Sunday came; and the scene of that Sunday was near in place to Jerusalem. Yet what then was Jerusalem? Did I fancy it to be the *omphalos* (navel) of the earth? That pretension had once been made for Jerusalem, and once for Delphi; and both pretensions had become ridiculous, as the figure of the planet became known. Yes; but if not of the earth, for earth's tenant, Jerusalem was the *omphalos* of mortality. Yet how? there, on the contrary, it was, as we infants understood, that mortality had been trampled under foot. True; but for that very reason, there it was that mortality had opened its very gloomiest crater. There it was, indeed, that the human had risen on wings from the grave — but, for that reason, there also it was that the divine had

been swallowed up by the abyss; the lesser star could not rise, before the greater would submit to eclipse. Summer, therefore, had connected itself with death, not merely as a mode of antagonism, but also through intricate relations to scriptural scenery and events.

Out of this digression, which was almost necessary for the purpose of showing how inextricably my feelings and images of death were entangled with those of summer, I return to the bed-chamber of my sister. From the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure; there the angel face; and, as people usually fancy, it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead, indeed, — the serene and noble forehead, — *that* might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish, — could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses? But so it was *not*. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow, — the most mournful that ear ever heard. Mournful! that is saying nothing. It was a wind that had swept the fields of mortality for a hundred centuries. Many times since, upon a summer day, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian, but saintly swell: it is in this world the one sole *audible* symbol of eternity. And three times in my life I have happened to hear the same sound in the same circum-

stances namely, when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.

Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps and glory of the heavens outside, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky a shaft which ran up forever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft forever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost, gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death, seemed to repel me; I slept—for how long I cannot say: slowly I recovered my self-possession, and found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.

O\* flight of the solitary child to the solitary God—flight from the ruined corpse to the throne that could not be ruined!—how rich wert thou in truth for after years! Rapture of grief that, being too mighty for a child to sustain, foundest a happy oblivion in a heaven-born dream, and within that sleep didst conceal a dream, whose meaning, in after years, when slowly I deciphered, suddenly there flashed upon me new light; and even by the grief of a child, as I will show you, reader, hereafter, were confounded the falsehoods of philosophers.†

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\* Φύγη υιοῦ πρὸς θεοῦ. — Plotinus.

† The thoughts referred to will be given in final notes; as at this point they seemed too much to interrupt the course of the narrative

In the *Opium Confessions* I touched a little upon the extraordinary power connected with opium (after long use) of amplifying the dimensions of time. Space, also, it amplifies by degrees that are sometimes terrific. But time it is upon which the exalting and multiplying power of opium chiefly spends its operation. Time becomes infinitely elastic, stretching out to such immeasurable and vanishing termini, that it seems ridiculous to compute the sense of it, on waking, by expressions commensurate to human life. As in starry fields one computes by diameters of the earth's orbit, or of Jupiter's, so, in valuing the *virtual* time lived during some dreams, the measurement by generations is ridiculous—by millenia is ridiculous; by æons, I should say, if æons were more determinate, would be also ridiculous. On this single occasion, however, in my life, the very inverse phenomenon occurred. But why speak of it in connection with opium? Could a child of six years old have been under that influence? No, but simply because it so exactly reversed the operation of opium. Instead of a short interval expanding into a vast one, upon this occasion a long one had contracted into a minute. I have reason to believe that a *very* long one had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind. When I returned to myself, there was a foot (or I fancied so) on the stairs. I was alarmed; for I believed that, if anybody should detect me, means would be taken to prevent my coming again. Hastily, therefore, I kissed the lips that I should kiss no more, and slunk like a guilty thing with stealthy steps from the room. Thus perished the vision, love-liest amongst all the shows which earth has revealed

to me ; thus mutilated was the parting which should have lasted forever ; thus tainted with fear was the farewell sacred to love and grief, to perfect love and perfect grief.

O, Abasuerus, everlasting Jew!\* fable or not a fable, thou when first starting on thy endless pilgrimage of woe, — thou when first flying through the gates of Jerusalem, and vainly yearning to leave the pursuing curse behind thee, — couldst not more certainly have read thy doom of sorrow in the misgivings of thy troubled brain than I when passing forever from my sister's room. The worm was at my heart ; and, confining myself to that state of life, I may say, the worm that could not die. For if, when standing upon the threshold of manhood, I had ceased to feel its perpetual gnawings, *that* was because a vast expansion of intellect, it was because new hopes, new necessities, and the frenzy of youthful blood, had translated me into a new creature. Man is doubtless *one* by some subtle *nexus* that we cannot perceive, extending from the newborn infant to the superannuated dotard : but as regards many affections and passions incident to his nature at different stages, he is *not* one ; the unity of man in this respect is coëxtensive only with the particular stage to which the passion belongs. Some passions, as that of sexual love, are celestial by one half of their origin, animal and earthly by the other half. These will not survive their own appropriate stage. But love, which 's *altogether* holy, like that between two children, will

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\* ' Everlasting Jew ! ' — *der ewige Jude* — which is the common German expression for *The Wandering Jew*, and sublimer even than our own.

revisit undoubtedly by glimpses the silence and the darkness of old age — and I repeat my belief — that, unless bodily torment should forbid it, that final experience in my sister's bed-room, or some other in which her innocence was concerned, will rise again for me, to illuminate the hour of death.

On the day following this which I have recorded, came a body of medical men to examine the brain, and the particular nature of the complaint, for in some of its symptoms it had shown perplexing anomalies. Such is the sanctity of death, and especially of death alighting on an innocent child, that even gossiping people do not gossip on such a subject. Consequently, I knew nothing of the purpose which drew together these surgeons, nor suspected anything of the cruel changes which might have been wrought in my sister's head. Long after this, I saw a similar case; I surveyed the corpse (it was that of a beautiful boy, eighteen years old, who had died of the same complaint) one hour *after* the surgeons had laid the skull in ruins; but the dishonors of this scrutiny were hidden by bandages, and had not disturbed the repose of the countenance. So it might have been here; but, if it were *not* so, then I was happy in being spared the shock, from having that marble image of peace, icy and rigid as it was, unsettled by disfiguring images. Some hours after the strangers had withdrawn, I crept again to the room; but the door was now locked, the key was taken away — and I was shut out forever.

Then came the funeral. I, as a point of decorum, was carried thither. I was put into a carriage with some gentlemen whom I did not know. They were



kind to me ; but naturally they talked of things disconnected with the occasion, and their conversation was a torment. At the church, I was told to hold a white handkerchief to my eyes. Empty hypocrisy ! What need had *he* of masques or mockeries, whose heart died within him at every word that was uttered ? During that part of the service which passed within the church, I made an effort to attend ; but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and I heard little consciously, except some fugitive strains from the sublime chapter of St. Paul, which in England is always read at burials. And here I notice a profound error of our present illustrious laureate. When I heard those dreadful words, — for dreadful they were to me, — “ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory ; ” such was the recoil of my feelings, that I could even have shrieked out a protesting — “ O, no, no ! ” if I had not been restrained by the publicity of the occasion. In after years, reflecting upon this revolt of my feelings, which, being the voice of nature in a child, must be as true as any mere *opinion* of a child might probably be false, I saw, at once, the unsoundness of a passage in *The Excursion*. The book is not here, but the substance I remember perfectly. Mr. Wordsworth argues, that if it were not for the unsteady faith which people fix upon the beatific condition after death of those whom they deplore, nobody could be found so selfish as even secretly to wish for the restoration to earth of a beloved object. A mother, for instance, could never dream of yearning for her child, and secretly calling it back by her silent aspirations



from the arms of God, if she were but reconciled to the belief that really it *was* in those arms. But this I utterly deny. To take my own case, when I heard those dreadful words of St. Paul applied to my sister, namely, that she should be raised a spiritual body, nobody can suppose that selfishness, or any other feeling than that of agonizing love, caused the rebellion of my heart against them. I knew already that she was to come again in beauty and power. I did not now learn this for the first time. And that thought, doubtless, made my sorrow sublimer; but also it made it deeper. For here lay the sting of it, namely, in the fatal words — “We shall be *changed*.” How was the unity of my interest in her to be preserved, if she were to be altered, and no longer to reflect in her sweet countenance the traces that were sculptured on my heart? Let a magician ask any woman whether she will permit him to improve her child, to raise it even from deformity to perfect beauty, if that must be done at the cost of its identity, and there is no loving mother but would reject his proposal with horror. Or, to take a case that has actually happened, if a mother were robbed of her child, at two years old, by gypsies, and the same child were restored to her at twenty, a fine young man, but divided by a sleep as it were of death from all remembrances that could restore the broken links of their once tender connection, — would she not feel her grief unhealed, and her heart defrauded? Undoubtedly she would. All of us ask not of God for a better thing than that we have lost; we ask for the same, even with its faults and its frailties. It is true that the sorrowing person will

also be changed eventually, but that must be by death. And a prospect so remote as that, and so alien from our present nature, cannot console us in an affliction which is not remote, but present — which is not spiritual, but human.

Lastly came the magnificent service which the English Church performs at the side of the grave. There is exposed once again, and for the last time, the coffin. All eyes survey the record of name, of sex, of age, and the day of departure from earth, — records how useless! and dropped into darkness as if messages addressed to worms. Almost at the very last comes the symbolic ritual, tearing and shattering the heart with volleying discharges, peal after peal, from the final artillery of woe. The coffin is lowered into its home; it has disappeared from the eye. The sacristan stands ready, with his shovel of earth and stones. The priest's voice is heard once more, — *earth to earth*, and the dread rattle ascends from the lid of the coffin; *ashes to ashes*, and again the killing sound is heard; *dust to dust*, and the farewell volley announces that the grave — the coffin — the face are sealed up for ever and ever.

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O, grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is, that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest us with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou healest its infirmities. Among the very foremost of mine was morbid sensibility to shame. And, ten years afterwards, I used to

reproach myself with this infirmity, by supposing the case, that, if it were thrown upon me to seek aid for a perishing fellow-creature, and that I could obtain that aid only by facing a vast company of critical or sneering faces, I might, perhaps, shrink basely from the duty. It is true, that no such case had ever actually occurred, so that it was a mere romance of casuistry to tax myself with cowardice so shocking. But, to feel a doubt, was to feel condemnation; and the crime which *might* have been was in my eyes the crime which *had* been. Now, however, all was changed; and for anything which regarded my sister's memory, in one hour I received a new heart. Once in Westmoreland I saw a case resembling it. I saw a ewe suddenly put off and abjure her own nature, in a service of love,—yes, slough it as completely as ever serpent sloughed his skin. Her lamb had fallen into a deep trench, from which all escape was hopeless, without the aid of man. And to a man she advanced boldly, bleating clamorously, until he followed her and rescued her beloved. Not less was the change in myself. Fifty thousand sneering faces would not have troubled me in any office of tenderness to my sister's memory. Ten legions would not have repelled me from seeking her, if there was a chance that she could be found. Mockery! it was lost upon me. Laugh at me, as one or two people did! I valued not their laughter. And when I was told insultingly to cease "my girlish tears," that word "*girlish*" had no sting for me, except as a verbal echo to the one eternal thought of my heart,—that a girl was the sweetest thing I, in my short life, had known — that a girl it was who had crowned the earth with

beauty, and had opened to my thirst fountains of pure celestial love, from which, in this world, I was to drink no more.

Interesting it is to observe how certainly all Jeep feelings agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are nursed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling; and all three — love, grief, religion — are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, the passion of reverie, or the mystery of devotion, — what were these, without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house, or in the neighboring fields. The awful stillness occasionally of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of gray or misty afternoons, — these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods or the desert air I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. I tormented the blue depths with obstinate scrutiny, sweeping them with my eyes, and searching them forever after one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment. The faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, aided by a slight defect in my eyes, grew upon me at this time. And I recall at the present moment one instance of that sort, which may show how merely shadows, or a gleam of brightness, or nothing at all, could furnish a sufficient basis for this creative faculty. On Sunday mornings I was always taken to church: it was a church on the old

and natural model of England, having aisles, galleries, organs, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of "all sick persons and young children," and that he would "show his pity upon all prisoners and captives," — I wept in secret, and raising my streaming eyes to the windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The sides of the windows were rich with storied glass, through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illumination mingling with the earthly emblazonries of what is grandest in man. There were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. There were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce insulting faces. There were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chords from an accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was uncolored, white fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky; were it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white awny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weep

ing clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly, also, his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Judea, once and forever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds,—those and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And oftentimes in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir,—when it rose high in arches, as might seem, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity,—sometimes I seemed to walk triumphantly upon those clouds which so recently I had looked up to as mementos of prostrate sorrow, and even as ministers of sorrow in its creations; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations of music I felt\* of grief itself as a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the causes of grief.

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\* "*I felt*"—The reader must not forget, in reading this and other passages, that, though a child's feelings are spoken of, it is not the child who speaks. I decipher what the child only felt in cipher. And so far is this distinction or this explanation from joining to anything metaphysical or doubtful that a man must be

I point so often to the feelings, the ideas, or the ceremonies of religion, because there never yet was profound grief nor profound philosophy which did not inoculate at many points with profound religion. But I request the reader to understand, that of all things I was not, and could not have been, a child trained to *talk* of religion, least of all to talk of it controversially or polemically. Dreadful is the picture, which in books we sometimes find, of children discussing the doctrines of Christianity, and even teaching their seniors the boundaries and distinctions between doctrine and doctrine. And it has often struck me with amazement, that the two things which God made most beautiful among his works, namely, infancy and pure religion, should, by the folly of man (in yoking them together on erroneous principles), neutralize each other's beauty, or even form a combination positively hateful. The religion becomes nonsense, and the child becomes a hypocrite. The religion is transfigured into cant, and the innocent child into a dissembling liar.\*

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grossly unobservant who is not aware of what I am here noticing, not as a peculiarity of this child or that, but as a necessity of all children. Whatsoever in a man's mind blossoms and expands to his own consciousness in mature life, must have preëxisted in germ during his infancy. I, for instance, did not, as a child, *consciously* read in my own deep feelings these ideas. No, not at all; nor was it possible for a child to do so. I, the child, had the feelings; I, the man, decipher them. In the child lay the handwriting mysterious to *him*; in me, the interpretation and the comment.

\* I except, however, one case, — the case of a child dying of an organic disorder, so, therefore, as to die slowly, and aware of its own condition. Because such a child is solemnized, and sometimes, in a partial sense, inspired, — inspired by the depth of its sufferings, and by the awfulness of its prospect. Such a child, having put off the earthly mind in many things, may naturally have out off the



God, be assured, takes care for the religion of children, wheresoever his Christianity exists. Wheresoever there is a national church established, to which a child sees his friends resorting, — wheresoever he beholds all whom he honors periodically prostrate before those illimitable heavens which fill to overflowing his young adoring heart, — wheresoever he sees the sleep of death falling at intervals upon men and women whom he knows, depth as confounding to the plummet of his mind as those heavens ascend beyond his power to pursue, — *there* take you no thought for the religion of a child, any more than for the lilies how they shall be arrayed, or for the ravens how they shall feed their young.

God speaks to children, also, in dreams, and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all things, when made vocal by the truths and services of a national church, God holds “communion undisturbed” with children. Solitude, though silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone*; all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that if he should be summoned to travel into God’s presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden,

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childish mind in all things. I thereby, speaking for myself only, acknowledge to have read with emotion a record of a little girl, who, knowing herself for months to be amongst the elect of death, became anxious, even to sickness of heart, for what she called the *conversion* of her father. Her filial duty and reverence had been swallowed up in filial love.



philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appals or fascinates a child's heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude through which already he has passed, and of another solitude, deeper still, through which he *has* to pass : reflex of one solitude — prefiguration of another.

O, burthen of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being! in his birth, which *has* been, — in his life, which *is*, — in his death, which *shall* be, — mighty and essential solitude! that wast, and art, and art to be; — thou broodest, like the spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air, which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all things, solitude for the child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude in life of millions upon millions, who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, with secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood, bringing before it, at intervals, the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. Reader, I tell you a truth, and hereafter I will convince you of this truth, that for a Grecian child solitude was nothing, but for a Christian child it has become the power of God and the mystery of God. O, mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to

be! thou kindling under the torch of Christian revelations, art now transfigured forever, and hast passed from a blank negation into a secret hieroglyphic from God, shadowing in the hearts of infancy the very dimmest of his truths!

"But you forget her," says the cynic; "you happened one day to forget this sister of yours." Why not? To cite the beautiful words of Wallenstein, —

"What pang  
Is permanent with man? From the highest,  
As from the vilest thing of every day,  
He learns to wean himself. For the strong hours  
Conquer him."\*

Yes, *there* lies the fountain of human oblivions. It is TIME, the great conqueror, it is the "strong hours" whose batteries storm every passion of men. For, in the fine expression of Schiller, "*Was verschmerzte nicht der mensch?*" What sorrow is in man that will not finally fret itself to sleep? Conquering, at last gates of brass, or pyramids of granite, why should it be a marvel to us, or a triumph to Time, that he is able to conquer a frail human heart?

However, for this once, my cynic must submit to be told that he is wrong. Doubtless, it is presumption in me to suggest that his sneers can ever go awry, any more than the shafts of Apollo. But still, however impossible such a thing is, in this one case it happens that they *have*. And when it happens that they do not, I will tell you, reader, why, in my opinion, it is and you will see that it warrants no exultation in the

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\* *Death of Wallenstein*, Act v. Scene 1 (Coleridge's Translation), relating to his remembrances of the younger Piccolomini.

**cynic.** Repeatedly I have heard a mother reproaching herself when the birth-day revolved of the little daughter whom so suddenly she had lost, with her own irresensibility, that could so soon need a remembrancer of the day. But, besides that the majority of people in this world (as being people called to labor) have no time left for cherishing grief by solitude and meditation, always it is proper to ask whether the memory of the lost person were chiefly dependent upon a visual image. No death is usually half so affecting as the death of a young child from two to five years old.

But yet, for the same reason which makes the grief more exquisite, generally for such a loss it is likely to be more perishable. Wherever the image, visually or audibly, of the lost person, is more essential to the life of the grief, there the grief will be more transitory.

Faces begin soon (in Shakspeare's fine expression) to "dislimn;" features fluctuate; combinations of feature unsettle. Even the expression becomes a mere idea that you can describe to another, but not an image that you can reproduce for yourself. Therefore it is that the faces of infants, though they are divine as flowers in a savanna of Texas, or as the carolling of birds in a forest, are, like flowers in Texas, and the carolling of birds in a forest, soon overtaken by the pursuing darkness that swallows up all things human. All glories of flesh vanish; and this, the glory of infantine beauty seen in the mirror of the memory, soonest of all. But when the departed persons worked upon yourself by powers that were intellectual and moral, — powers *in* the flesh, though not *of* the flesh, — the **memorials in your own heart become more steadfast, if less**

affecting at the first. Now, in my sister were combined for me both graces, — the graces of childhood, and the graces of expanding thought. Besides that, as regards merely the *personal* image, always the smooth rotundity of baby features must vanish sooner, as being less individual than the features in a child of eight, touched with a pensive tenderness, and exalted into a characteristic expression by a premature intellect.

Rarely do things perish from my memory that are worth remembering. Rubbish dies instantly. Hence it happens that passages in Latin or English poets, which I never could have read but once (and *that* thirty years ago), often begin to blossom anew when I am lying awake, unable to sleep. I become a distinguished compositor in the darkness: and, with my aerial composing-stick, sometimes I “set up” half a page of verses, that would be found tolerably correct if collated with the volume that I never had in my hand but once. I mention this in no spirit of boasting. Far from it: for, on the contrary, among my mortifications have been compliments to my memory, when, in fact, any compliment that I had merited was due to the higher faculty of an electric aptitude for seizing analogies, and by means of those aerial pontoons passing over like lightning from one topic to another. Still it is a fact that this pertinacious life of memory for things that simply touch the ear, without touching the consciousness, does, in fact, beset me. Said but once, said but softly, not marked at all, words revive before me in darkness and solitude; and they arrange themselves gradually into sentences, but through an effort some-

times of a distressing kind, to which I am in a manner forced to become a party. This being so, it was no great instance of that power, that three separate passages in the funeral service, all of which but one had escaped my notice at the time, and even that one as to the part I am going to mention, but all of which must have struck on my ear, restored themselves perfectly when I was lying awake in bed; and though struck by their beauty, I was also incensed by what seemed to me the harsh sentiment expressed in two of these passages. I will cite all the three in an abbreviated form, both for my immediate purpose, and for the indirect purpose of giving to those unacquainted with the English funeral service some specimens of its beauty.

The first passage was this: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take unto himself the soul of our dear sister here departed, we therefore commit her body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." \* \* \*

I pause to remark that a sublime effect arises at this point through a sudden rapturous interpolation from the Apocalypse, which, according to the rubric, "shall be read or sung;" but always let it be sung, and by the full choir:

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors."

The second passage, almost immediately succeeding to this awful burst of heavenly trumpets, and the one

which more particularly offended me, though otherwise even then, in my seventh year, I could not but be touched by its beauty, was this:—"Almighty God with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom." \* \* \* \*

In what world was I living when a man (calling himself a man of God) could stand up publicly and give God "hearty thanks" that he had taken away my sister? But, young child, understand—taken her away from the miseries of this sinful world. O yes! I hear what you say; I understand *that*; but that makes no difference at all. She being gone, this world doubtless (as you say) is a world of unhappiness. But for me *ubi Cæsar, ibi Roma*—where my sister was, there was paradise; no matter whether in heaven above, or on the earth beneath. And he had taken her away, cruel priest! of his "*great mercy!*" I did not presume, child though I was, to think rebelliously against *that*. The reason was not any hypocritical or canting submission where my heart yielded none, but because already my deep musing intellect had perceived a mystery and a labyrinth in the economics of this world. God, I saw, moved not as *we* moved—walked not as *we* walked—thought not as *we* think. Still I saw no mercy to myself, a poor, frail, dependent

reature, torn away so suddenly from the prop on which altogether it depended. O yes! perhaps there was; and many years after I came to suspect it. Nevertheless it was a benignity that pointed far ahead; such as by a child could not have been perceived, because then the great arch had not come round; could not have been recognized, if it *had* come round; could not have been valued, if it had even been dimly recognized.

Finally, as the closing prayer in the whole service, stood this, which I acknowledged then, and now acknowledge, as equally beautiful and consolatory; for in this was no harsh peremptory challenge to the infirmities of human grief, as to a thing not meriting notice in a religious rite. On the contrary, there was a gracious condescension from the great apostle to grief, as to a passion that he might perhaps himself have participated.

“O, merciful God! the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; who also taught us by his holy apostle St. Paul not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in *him*; we meekly beseech thee, oh Father! to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in *him* as our hope is — that this our sister doth.”

Ah, *that* was beautiful, — that was heavenly! We might be sorry, we had leave to be sorry; only not without hope. And we were by hope to rest in *Him*, as this our sister doth. And howsoever a man may think that he is without hope, I, that have read the writing upon these great abysses of grief, and viewed



their shadows under the correction of mightier shadows from deeper abysses since then, abysses of aboriginal fear and eldest darkness, in which yet I believe that all hope had not absolutely died, know that he is in a natural error. If, for a moment, I and so many others, wallowing in the dust of affliction, could yet rise up suddenly like the dry corpse\* which stood upright in the glory of life when touched by the bones of the prophet; if in those vast choral anthems, heard by my childish ear, the voice of God wrapt itself as in a cloud of music, saying — “Child, that sorrowest, I command thee to rise up and ascend for a season into my heaven of heavens,” — then it was plain that despair, that the anguish of darkness, was not *essential* to such sorrow, but might come and go even as light comes and goes upon our troubled earth.

Yes! the light may come and go; grief may wax and wane; grief may sink; and grief again may rise, as in impassioned minds oftentimes it does, even to the heaven of heavens; but there is a necessity that, if too much left to itself in solitude, finally it will descend into a depth from which there is no reäscent; into a disease which seems no disease; into a languishing which, from its very sweetness, perplexes the mind, and is fancied to be very health. Witchcraft has seized upon you, — nympholepsy has struck you. Now you have no more. You acquiesce; nay, you are passion-

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\* “*Like the dry corpse which stood upright.*” — See the *Second Book of Kings*, chapter xiii. v. 20 and 21. Thirty years ago this impressive incident was made the subject of a large altar-piece by Mr. Allston, an interesting American artist, then resident in London



ately delighted in your condition. Sweet becomes the grave, because you also hope immediately to travel thither: luxurious is the separation, because only perhaps for a few weeks shall it exist for you; and it will then prove but the brief summer night that had retarded a little, by a refinement of rapture, the heavenly dawn of reünion. Inevitable sometimes it is in solitude — that this should happen with minds morbidly meditative; that, when we stretch out our arms in darkness, vainly striving to draw back the sweet faces that have vanished, slowly arises a new stratagem of grief, and we say, — “Be it that they no more come back to us, yet what hinders but we should go to *them*?”

Perilous is that crisis for the young. In its effect perfectly the same as the ignoble witchcraft of the poor African *Obeah*,\* this sublimer witchcraft of grief will, if left to follow its own natural course, terminate in the same catastrophe of death. Poetry, which neglects no phenomena that are interesting to the heart of man, has sometimes touched a little

“On the sublime attractions of the grave.”

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\* “*African Obeah*.” — Thirty years ago it would not have been necessary to say one word of the Obi or Obeah magic; because at that time several distinguished writers (Miss Edgeworth, for instance, in her *Belinda*) had made use of this superstition in fictions, and because the remarkable history of Three-fingered Jack, a story brought upon the stage, had made the superstition notorious as a fact. Now, however, so long after the case has probably passed out of the public mind, it may be proper to mention, that when an Obeah man — that is, a professor of this dark collusion with human fears and human credulity — had once woven his dreadful net of ghostly terrors, and had thrown it over his selected victim, vainly did the victim flutter, struggle, languish in the meshes; unless the spells were reversed, he generally perished; and with one wound, except from his own too domineering fancy.

But you think that these attractions, existing at times for the adult, could not exist for the child. Understand that you are wrong. Understand that these attractions *do* exist for the child; and perhaps as much more strongly than they *can* exist for the adult, by the whole difference between the concentration of a childish love, and the inevitable distraction upon multiplied objects of any love that can affect any adult. There is a German superstition (well known by a popular translation) of the Erl-king's Daughter, who fixes her love upon some child, and seeks to wile him away into her own shadowy kingdom in forests.

"Who is it that rides through the forest so fast?"

It is a knight, who carries his child before him on the saddle. The Erl-king's Daughter rides on his right hand, and still whispers temptations to the infant audible only to *him*.

"If thou wilt, dear baby, with me go away,  
We will see a fine show, we will play a fine play

The consent of the baby is essential to her success. And finally she *does* succeed. Other charms, other temptations, would have been requisite for me. My intellect was too advanced for those fascinations. But could the Erl-king's Daughter have revealed herself to me, and promised to lead me where my sister was, she might have wiled me by the hand into the dimmest forests upon earth. Languishing was my condition at that time. Still I languished for things "which" (a voice from heaven seemed to answer through my own heart) "*cannot* be granted;" and which, when again

I languished, again the voice repeated, "cannot be granted."

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Well it was for me that, at this crisis, I was summoned to put on the harness of life by commencing my classical studies under one of my guardians, a clergyman of the English Church, and (so far as regarded Latin) a most accomplished scholar.

At the very commencement of my new studies there happened an incident which afflicted me much for a short time, and left behind a gloomy impression, that suffering and wretchedness were diffused amongst all creatures that breathe. A person had given me a kitten. There are three animals which seem, beyond all others, to reflect the beauty of human infancy in two of its elements — namely, joy and guileless innocence, though less in its third element of simplicity, because *that* requires language for its full expression: these three animals are the kitten, the lamb, and the fawn. Other creatures may be as happy, but they do not show it so much. Great was the love which poor silly I had for this little kitten; but, as I left home at ten in the morning, and did not return till near five in the afternoon, I was obliged, with some anxiety, to throw it for those seven hours upon its own discretion, as infirm a basis for reasonable hope as could be imagined. I did not wish the kitten, indeed, at all less foolish than it was, except just when I was leaving home, and then its exceeding folly gave me a pang. Just about that time, it happened that we had received, as a present from Leicestershire, a fine young Newfoundland dog, who

was under a cloud of disgrace for crimes of his youthful blood committed in that county. One day he had taken too great a liberty with a pretty little cousin of mine, Emma H——, about four years old. He had, in fact, bitten off her cheek, which, remaining attached by a shred, was, through the energy of a governess, replaced, and subsequently healed without a scar. His name being *Turk*, he was immediately pronounced by the best Greek scholar of that neighborhood, *ἔπιτιμος*, (that is, named significantly, or reporting his nature in his name). But as Miss Emma confessed to having been engaged in taking away a bone from him, on which subject no dog can be taught to understand a joke, it did not strike our own authorities that he was to be considered in a state of reprobation; and as our gardens (near to a great town) were, on account chiefly of melons, constantly robbed, it was held that a moderate degree of fierceness was rather a favorable trait in his character. My poor kitten, it was supposed, had been engaged in the same playful trespass upon Turk's property as my Leicestershire cousin, and Turk laid her dead on the spot. It is impossible to describe my grief when the case was made known to me at five o'clock in the evening, by a man's holding out the little creature dead: she that I had left so full of glorious life — life which even in a kitten is infinite, — was now stretched in motionless repose. I remember that there was a large coal-stack in the yard. I dropped my Latin books, sat down upon a huge block of coal, and burst into a passion of tears. The man, struck with my tumultuous grief, hurried into the house; and from the lower regions deployed instantly the women of the

laundry and the kitchen. No one subject is so absolutely sacred, and enjoys so *classical* a sanctity among servant-girls, as 1. Grief; and 2. Love which is unfortunate. All the young women took me up in their arms and kissed me; and, last of all, an elderly woman, who was the cook, not only kissed me, but wept so audibly, from some suggestion doubtless of grief personal to herself, that I threw my arms about her neck and kissed *her* also. It is probable, as I now suppose, that some account of my grief for my sister had reached them. Else I was never allowed to visit *their* region of the house. But, however *that* might be, afterwards it struck me, that if I had met with so much sympathy, or with any sympathy at all, from the servant chiefly connected with myself in the desolating grief I had suffered, possibly I should not have been so profoundly shaken.

But did I in the mean time feel anger towards Turk? Not the least. And the reason was this:—My guardian, who taught me Latin, was in the habit of coming over and dining at my mother's table whenever he pleased. On these occasions, he, who like myself pitied *dependent* animals, went invariably into the yard of the offices, taking me with him, and unchained the dogs. There were two, — *Grim*, a mastiff, and *Turk*, our young friend. My guardian was a bold, athletic man, and delighted in dogs. He told me, which also my own heart told me, that these poor dogs languished out their lives under this confinement. The moment that I and my guardian (*ego et rex meus*) appeared in sight of the two kennels, it is impossible to express the joy of the dogs. Turk was usually restless; Grim slept away

his life in surliness. But at the sight of us, — of my little insignificant self and my six-foot guardian, — both dogs yelled with delight. We unfastened their chains with our own hands, they licking our hands; and as to myself licking my miserable little face; and at one bound they reëntered upon their natural heritage of joy. Always we took them through the fields, where they molested nothing, and closed with giving them a cold bath in the brook which bounded my father's property. What despair must have possessed our dogs when they were taken back to their hateful prisons! and I, for my part, not enduring to see their misery, slunk away when the rechaining commenced. It was in vain to tell me that all people, who had property out of doors to protect, chained up dogs in the same way. *This* only proved the extent of the oppression; for a monstrous oppression it *did* seem, that creatures, boiling with life and the desires of life, should be thus detained in captivity until they were set free by death. That liberation visited poor *Grim* and *Turk* sooner than any of us expected, for they were both poisoned, within the year that followed, by a party of burglars. At the end of that year, I was reading the *Æneid*; and it struck me, who remembered the howling recusancy of *Turk*, as a peculiarly fine circumstance, introduced amongst the horrors of *Tartarus*, that sudden gleam of powerful animals, full of life and conscious rights, rebelling against chains: —

“ Iræque leonum  
Vincla recusantum.”\*

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\* What follows, I think (for look I have none of any kind where his paper is proceeding), namely: *et ser. & sub nocte rudentium, is*

Virgil had doubtless picked up that gem in his visits at feeding-time to the *caveæ* of the Roman amphitheatre. But the rights of brute creatures to a merciful, forbearance on the part of man could not enter into the feeblest conceptions of one belonging to a nation that (although too noble to be *wantonly* cruel) yet in the same amphitheatre manifested so little regard even to human rights. Under Christianity the condition of the brute has improved, and will improve much more. There is ample room. For, I am sorry to say, that the commonest vice of Christian children, too often surveyed with careless eyes by mothers that in their *human* relations are full of kindness, is cruelty to the inferior creatures thrown upon their mercy. For my own part, what had formed the ground-work of my happiness (since joyous was my nature, though overspread with a cloud of sadness) had been from the first a heart overflowing with love. And I had drunk in too profoundly the spirit of Christianity from our many nursery readings, not to read also in its divine words the justification of my own tendencies. That which I desired was the thing which I ought to desire; the mercy that I loved was the mercy that God had blessed. From the Sermon on the Mount resounded forever in my ears -- "Blessed are the merciful!" I needed not to add -- "For they shall obtain mercy." By lips so holy, and when standing in the atmosphere of truths so divine, simply to have been blessed -- *that* was a sufficient ratification; every truth so revealed, and so hallowed by

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probably a mistake of Virgil's; the lions did not roar because night was approaching, but because night brought with it their principal meal, and consequently the impatience of hunger



position, starts into sudden life, and becomes to itself its own authentication, needing no proof to convince, — needing no promise to allure.

It may well be supposed, therefore, that having so early awakened within me what may be philosophically called the *transcendental* justice of Christianity, I blamed not *Turk* for yielding to the coercion of his nature. He had killed the object of my love. But, besides that he was under the constraint of a primary appetite, *Turk* was himself the victim of a killing oppression. He was doomed to a fretful existence so long as he should exist at all. Nothing could reconcile this to my benignity, which at that time rested upon two pillars, — upon the deep, deep heart which God had given to me at my birth, and upon exquisite health. Up to the age of two, and almost through that entire space of twenty-four months, I had suffered from ague; but when *that* left me, all germs and traces of ill health fled away forever, except only such (and those how curable!) as I inherited from my school-boy distresses in London, or had created by means of opium. Even the long ague was not without ministrations of favor to my prevailing temper; and, on the whole, no subject for pity, since naturally it won for me the sweet caresses of female tenderness, both young and old. I was a little petted; but you see by this time, reader, that I must have been too much of a philosopher, even in the year one *ab urbe conditâ* of my frail earthly tenement, to abuse such indulgence. It also won for me a ride on horseback whenever the weather permitted. I was placed on a pillow, in front of a rankered old man, upon a large white horse not so



young as I was, but still showing traces of blood. And even the old man, who was both the oldest and the worst of the three, talked with gentleness to myself, reserving his surliness for all the rest of the world.

These things pressed with a gracious power of incubation upon my predispositions; and in my overflowing love I did things fitted to make the reader laugh, and sometimes fitted to bring myself into perplexity. One instance from a thousand may illustrate the combination of both effects. At four years old, I had repeatedly seen the housemaid raising her long broom, and pursuing (generally destroying) a vagrant spider. The holiness of all life, in my eyes, forced me to devise plots for saving the poor doomed wretch; and thinking intercession likely to prove useless, my policy was, to draw off the housemaid on pretence of showing her a picture, until the spider, already *en route*, should have had time to escape. Very soon, however, the shrewd housemaid, marking the coincidence of these picture exhibitions with the agonies of fugitive spiders, detected my stratagem; so that, if the reader will pardon an expression borrowed from the street, henceforwards the picture was "no go." However, as she approved of my motive, she told me of the many murders that the spider had committed, and next (which was worse) of the many that he certainly *would* commit, if reprieved. This staggered me. I could have gladly forgiven the past, but it *did* seem a false mercy to spare one spider in order to scatter death amongst fifty flies. I thought timidly, for a moment, of suggesting that people sometimes repented, and that

he might repent; but I checked myself, on considering that I had never read any account, and that she might laugh at the idea, of a penitent spider. To desist was a necessity, in these circumstances. But the difficulty which the housemaid had suggested did not depart, it troubled my musing mind to perceive that the welfare of one creature might stand upon the pain of another; and the case of the spider remained thenceforwards even more perplexing to my understanding than it was painful to my heart.

The reader is likely to differ from me upon the question, moved by recurring to such experiences of childhood, whether much value attaches to the perceptions and intellectual glimpses of a child. Children, like men, range through a gamut that is infinite, of temperaments and characters, ascending from the very dust below our feet to highest heaven. I have seen children that were sensual, brutal, devilish. But, thanks be to the *vis medicatrix* of human nature, and to the goodness of God, these are as rare exhibitions as all other monsters. People thought, when seeing such odious travesties and burlesques upon lovely human infancy, that perhaps the little wretches might be *kilcrops*.\* Yet, possibly (it has since occurred to me), even these children of the fiend, as they seemed, might have one chord in their horrible natures that answered to the call of some sublime purpose. There is a mimic instance of this kind, often found amongst ourselves in natures that are not really "horrible," but

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\* "*Kilcrops*."—See, amongst Southey's early poems, one upon this superstition. Southey argues *contra*, but, for my part, I should have been more disposed to hold a brief on the other side

which *seem* such to persons viewing them from a station not sufficiently central:—Always there are mischievous boys in a neighborhood,—boys who tie canisters to the tails of cats belonging to ladies,—a thing which *greatly* I disapprove; and who rob orchards,—a thing which *slightly* I disapprove; and, behold! the next day, on meeting the injured ladies, they say to me, “O, my dear friend, never pretend to argue for him! This boy, we shall all see, will come to be hanged.” Well, *that* seems a disagreeable prospect for all parties; so I change the subject; and, lo! five years later, there is an English frigate fighting with a frigate of heavier metal (no matter of what nation). The noble captain has manœuvred as only *his* countrymen can manœuvre; he has delivered his broadsides as only the proud islanders can deliver them. Suddenly he sees the opening for a *coup-de-main*—through his speaking-trumpet he shouts, “*Where are my boarders?*” And instantly rise upon the deck, with the gayety of boyhood, in white shirt-sleeves bound with black ribands, fifty men, the *élite* of the crew; and, behold! at the very head of them, cutlass in hand, is our friend, the tier of canisters to the tails of ladies’ cats,—a thing which *greatly* I disapprove, and also the robber of orchards,—a thing which *slightly* I disapprove. But here is a man that will not suffer you either greatly or slightly to disapprove him. Fire celestial burns in his eye; his nation—his glorious nation—is in his mind; himself he regards no more than the life of a cat, or the ruin of a canister. On the deck of the enemy he throws himself with rapture; and if *he* is amongst the killed,—if he, for an object so

gloriously unselfish, lays down with joy his life and glittering youth, — mark this, that, perhaps, he will not be the least in heaven.

But coming back to the case of childhood, I maintain steadfastly that into all the *elementary* feelings of man children look with more searching gaze than adults. My opinion is, that where circumstances favor, where the heart is deep, where humility and tenderness exist in strength, where the situation is favorable as to solitude and as to genial feelings, children have a specific power of contemplating the truth, which departs as they enter the world. It is clear to me, that children, upon elementary paths which require no knowledge of the world to unravel, tread more firmly than men; have a more pathetic sense of the beauty which lies in justice; and, according to the immortal ode of our great laureate [ode "On the Intimations of Immortality in Childhood"], a far closer communion with God. I, if you observe, do not much intermeddle with religion, properly so called. My path lies on the interspace between religion and philosophy, that connects them both. Yet here, for once, I shall trespass on grounds not properly mine, and desire you to observe in St. Matthew, chapter xxi., and verse 15, *who* were those that, crying in the temple, made the first public recognition of Christianity. Then, if you say, "O, but children echo what they hear, and are no independent authorities." I must request you to extend your reading into verse 16, where you will find that the testimony of these children, as bearing an *original* value, was ratified by the highest testimony; and the recognition of these children did itself receive a heavenly

recognition And this could *not* have been, unless there were children in Jerusalem who saw into truth with a far sharper eye than Sanhedrims and Rabbis.

It is impossible, with respect to any memorable grief that it can be adequately exhibited so as to indicate the enormity of the convulsion which really it caused, without viewing it under a variety of aspects,—a thing which is here almost necessary for the effect of proportion to what follows: 1st, for instance, in its immediate pressure, so stunning and confounding; 2dly, in its oscillations, as in its earlier agitations, frantic with tumults, that borrow the wings of the winds; or in its diseased impulses of sick languishing desire, through which sorrow transforms itself to a sunny angel, that beckons us to a sweet repose. These phases of revolving affection I have already sketched. And I shall also sketch a third, that is, where the affliction, seemingly hushing itself to sleep, suddenly soars upwards again upon combining with *another* mode of sorrow, namely, anxiety without definite limits, and the trouble of a reproaching conscience. As sometimes,\* upon the English lakes, water-fowl that have careered in the air until the eye is wearied with the eternal wheelings of their inimitable flight — Grecian simplicities of motion, amidst a labyrinthine infinity of curves that would baffle the geometry of Apollonius — seek the water at last, as if with some settled purpose (you imagine) of reposing. Ah, how little have you understod the

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\* In this place I derive my feeling partly from a lovely sketch of the appearance, in verse, by Mr. Wordsworth; partly from my own experience of the case; and, not having the poems here I know not how to proportion my acknowledgments

omnipotence of that life which they inherit! *They* want no rest: they laugh at resting; all is "make believe," as when an infant hides its laughing face behind its mother's shawl. For a moment it is still. Is it meaning to rest? Will its impatient heart endure to lurk there for long? Ask, rather, if a cataract will stop from fatigue. Will a sunbeam sleep on its travels? or the Atlantic rest from its labors? As little can the infant, as little can the water-fowl of the lakes, suspend their play, except as a variety of play, or rest unless when nature compels them. Suddenly starts off the infant, suddenly ascend the birds, to new evolutions as incalculable as the caprices of a kaleidoscope; and the glory of their motions, from the mixed immortalities of beauty and inexhaustible variety, becomes at least pathetic to survey. So also, and with such life of variation, do the *primary* convulsions of nature — such, perhaps, as only *primary*\* formations in the human system can experience — come round again and again by reverberating shocks.

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\* "And so, then," the cynic objects, "you rank your own mind (and you tell us so frankly) amongst the primary formations!" As I love to annoy him, it would give me pleasure to reply — "Perhaps I do." But as I never answer more questions than are necessary, I confine myself to saying, that this is not a necessary construction of the words. Some minds stand nearer to the type of the original nature in man, are truer than others to the great magnet in our dark planet. Minds that are impassioned on a more colossal scale than ordinary, deeper in their vibrations, and more extensive in the scale of their vibrations, whether, in other parts of their intellectual system, they had or had not a corresponding compass, will tremble to greater depths from a fearful convulsion, and will come round by a longer curve of undulations.

The new intercourse with my guardian, and the changes of scene which naturally it led to, were of use in weaning my mind from the mere disease which threatened it in case I had been left any longer to my total solitude. But out of these changes grew an incident which restored my grief, though in a more troubled shape, and now for the first time associated with something like remorse and deadly anxiety. I can safely say that this was my earliest trespass, and perhaps a venial one, all things considered. Nobody ever discovered it; and but for my own frankness it would not be known to this day. But *that* I could not know; and for years, — that is, from seven or earlier up to ten, — such was my simplicity, that I lived in constant terror. This, though it revived my grief, did me probably great service; because it was no longer a state of languishing desire tending to torpor, but of feverish irritation and gnawing care, that kept alive the activity of my understanding. The case was this: — It happened that I had now, and commencing with my first introduction to Latin studies, a large weekly allowance of pocket-money, — too large for my age, but safely intrusted to myself, who never spent or desired to spend one fraction of it upon anything but books. But all proved too little for my colossal schemes. Had the Vatican, the Bodleian, and the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, been all emptied into one collection for my private gratification, little progress would have been made towards content in this particular craving. Very soon I had run ahead of my allowance, and was about three guineas deep in debt. There I paused; for deep anxiety now began to oppress me as to the course in

which this mysterious (and indeed guilty) current of debt would finally flow. For the present it was frozen up; but I had some reason for thinking that Christmas thawed all debts whatsoever, and set them in motion towards innumerable pockets. Now *my* debt would be thawed with all the rest; and in what direction would it flow? There was no river that would carry it off to sea; to somebody's pocket it would beyond a doubt make its way; and who *was* that somebody? This question haunted me forever. Christmas had come, Christmas had gone, and I heard nothing of the three guineas. But I was not easier for *that*. Far rather I *would* have heard of it; for this indefinite approach of a loitering catastrophe gnawed and fretted my feelings. No Grecian audience ever waited with more shuddering horror for the anagnorisis\* of the Œdipus, than I for the explosion of my debt. Had I been less ignorant, I should have proposed to mortgage my weekly allowance for the debt, or to form a sinking fund for redeeming it; for the *weekly* sum was nearly five per cent. on the entire debt. But I had a mysterious awe of ever alluding to it. This arose from my want of some confidential friend; whilst my grief pointed continually to the remembrance, that *so* it had not always been. But was not the bookseller to blame in suffering a child scarcely seven years old to contract such a debt? Not in the least. He was both a rich man,

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\* That is (as on account of English readers is added), the recognition of his true identity, which, in one moment, and by a horrid flash of revelation, connects him with acts incestuous murderous parricidal in the past, and with a mysterious fatality of woe lurking in the future.



who could not possibly care for my trifling custom, and notoriously an honorable man. Indeed, the money which I myself spent every week in books would reasonably have caused him to presume that so small a sum as three guineas might well be authorized by my family. He stood, however, on plainer ground; for my guardian, who was very indolent (as people chose to call it),—that is, like his little melancholy ward, spent all his time in reading,—often enough would send me to the bookseller's with a written order for books. This was to prevent my forgetting. But when he found that such a thing as "forgetting," in the case of a book, was wholly out of the question for me, the trouble of writing was dismissed. And thus I had become factor-general, on the part of my guardian, both for *his* books, and for such as were wanted on my own account, in the natural course of my education. My private "little account" had therefore in fact flowed homewards at Christmas, not (as I anticipated) in the shape of an independent current, but as a little tributary rill, that was lost in the waters of some more important river. This I now know, but could not then have known with any certainty. So far, however, the affair would gradually have sunk out of my anxieties, as time wore on. But there was another item in the case, which, from the excess of my ignorance, preyed upon my spirits far more keenly; and this, keeping itself alive, kept also the other incident alive. With respect to the debt, I was not so ignorant as to think it of much danger by the mere amount,—my own allowance furnished a scale for preventing *that* mistake;—it was the principle,—the having presumed to contract debts on

my own account, — that I feared to have exposed. But this other case was a ground for anxiety, even as regarded the amount; not really, but under the jesting representation made to me, which I (as ever before and after) swallowed in perfect faith. Amongst the books which I had bought, all English, was a history of Great Britain, commencing, of course, with Brutus and a thousand years of impossibilities; these fables being generously thrown in as a little gratuitous *extra* to the mass of truths which were to follow. This was to be completed in sixty or eighty parts, I believe. But there was another work left more indefinite as to its ultimate extent, and which, from its nature, seemed to imply a far higher range. It was a general history of navigation, supported by a vast body of voyages. Now, when I considered with myself what a huge thing the sea was, and that so many thousands of captains, commodores, admirals, were eternally running up and down it, and scoring lines upon its face so rankly, that in some of the main “streets” and “squares” (as one might call them), their tracts would blend into one undistinguishable blot, I began to fear that such a work tended to infinity. What was little England to the universal sea? And yet *that* went perhaps to fourscore parts. Not enduring the uncertainty that now besieged my tranquillity, I resolved to know the worst; and, on a day ever memorable to me, I went down to the bookseller’s. He was a mild, elderly man, and to myself had always shown a kind, indulgent manner. Partly, perhaps, he had been struck by my extreme gravity; and partly, during the many conversations had with him, on occasion of my guardian’s orders for

books, with my laughable simplicity. But there was another reason which had early won for me his paternal regard. For the first three or four months I had found Latin something of a drudgery; and the incident which forever knocked away the "shores," at that time preventing my launch upon the general bosom of Latin literature, was this:—One day, the bookseller took down a Beza's *Latin Testament*; and, opening it, asked me to translate for him the chapter which he pointed to. I was struck by perceiving that it was the great chapter of St. Paul on the grave and resurrection. I had never seen a Latin version; yet, from the simplicity of the scriptural style in *any* translation (though Beza's is far from good), I could not well have failed in construing. But, as it happened to be this particular chapter, which in English I had read again and again with so passionate a sense of its grandeur, I read it off with a fluency and effect like some great opera singer uttering a rapturous *bravura*. My kind old friend expressed himself gratified, making me a present of the book as a mark of his approbation. And it is remarkable, that from this moment, when the deep memory of the English words had forced me into seeing the precise correspondence of the two concurrent streams,—Latin and English,—never again did any difficulty arise to check the velocity of my progress in this particular language. At less than eleven years of age, when as yet I was a very indifferent Grecian, I had become a brilliant master of Latinity, as my *alcaics* and *choriambics* remain to testify; and the whole occasion of a change so memorable to a boy, was this casual summons to translate a composition

with which my heart was filled. Ever after this he showed me a caressing kindness, and so condescendingly, that, generally, he would leave any people, for a moment, with whom he was engaged, to come and speak to me. On this fatal day, however,—for such it proved to me,—he could not do this. He saw me, indeed, and nodded, but could not leave a party of elderly strangers. This accident threw me unavoidably upon one of his young people. Now, this was a market day, and there was a press of country people present, whom I did not wish to hear my question. Never did a human creature, with his heart palpitating at Delphi for the solution of some killing mystery, stand before the priestess of the oracle, with lips that moved more sadly than mine, when now advancing to a smiling young man at a desk. His answer was to decide, though I could not exactly know *that*, whether, for the next two years, I was to have an hour of peace. He was a handsome, good-natured young man, but full of fun and frolic; and I dare say was amused with what must have seemed to *him* the absurd anxiety of my features. I described the work to him, and he understood me at once. How many volumes did he think it would extend to? There was a whimsical expression, perhaps, of drollery about his eyes, but which, unhappily, under my preconceptions, I translated into scorn, as he replied, “How many volumes? O! really, I can’t say; maybe a matter of 15,000, be the same more or less.” “*More?*” I said, in horror, altogether neglecting the contingency of “less.” “Why,” he said, “we can settle these things to a nicety. But, considering the subject” [ay, *that* was the very thing which I myself

considered], "I should say there might be some trifle over, as suppose 400 or 500 volumes, be the same more or less." What, then,—here there might be supplements to supplements,—the work might positively *never* end! On one pretence or another, if an author or publisher might add 500 volumes, he might add another round 15,000. Indeed, it strikes one even now, that by the time all the one-legged commodores and yellow admirals of that generation had exhausted their long yarns, another generation would have grown another crop of the same gallant spinners. I asked no more, but slunk out of the shop, and never again entered it with cheerfulness, or propounded any frank questions, as heretofore. For I was now seriously afraid of pointing attention to myself as one that, by having purchased some numbers, and obtained others on credit, had silently contracted an engagement to take all the rest, though they should stretch to the crack of doom. Certainly I had never heard of a work that extended to 15,000 volumes; but still there was no natural impossibility that it should; and, if in any case, in none so reasonably as one upon the inexhaustible sea. Besides, any slight mistake as to the letter of the number could not affect the horror of the final prospect. I saw by the imprint, and I heard, that this work emanated from London, a vast centre of mystery to me, and the more so, as a thing unseen at any time by my eyes, and nearly two hundred miles distant. I felt the fatal truth, that here was a ghostly cobweb radiating into all the provinces from the mighty metropolis. I secretly had trodden upon the outer circumference,—had damaged or deranged the fine threads or links.—

concealment or reparation there could be none. Slowly perhaps, but surely, the vibration would travel back to London. The ancient spider that sat there at the centre would rush along the net-work through all longitudes and latitudes, until he found the responsible caitiff, author of so much mischief. Even with less ignorance than mine, there *was* something to appal a child's imagination in the vast systematic machinery by which any elaborate work could disperse itself, could levy money, could put questions and get answers,—all in profound silence, nay, even in darkness, searching every nook of every town and of every hamlet in so populous a kingdom. I had some dim terrors, also, connected with the Stationers' Company. I had often observed them in popular works threatening unknown men with unknown chastisements, for offences equally unknown; nay, to myself, absolutely inconceivable. Could I be the mysterious criminal so long pointed out, as it were, in prophecy? I figured the stationers, doubtless all powerful men, pulling at one rope, and my unhappy self hanging at the other end. But an image, which seems now even more ludicrous than the rest, at that time, was the one most connected with the revival of my grief. It occurred to my subtlety, that the Stationers' Company, or any other company, could not possibly demand the money until they had delivered the volumes. And, as no man could say that I had ever positively refused to receive them, they would have no pretence for not accomplishing this delivery in a civil manner. Unless I should turn out to be no customer at all, at present it was clear that I had a right to be considered a most excellent customer; one, in fact

who had given an order for fifteen thousand volumes. Then rose up before me this great opera-house "scena" of the delivery. There would be a ring at the front door. A wagoner in the front, with a bland voice, would ask for "a young gentleman who had given an order to *their* house." Looking out, I should perceive a procession of carts and wagons, all advancing in measured movements; each in turn would present its rear, deliver its cargo of volumes, by shooting them, like a load of coals, on the lawn, and wheel off to the rear, by way of clearing the road for its successors. Then the impossibility of even asking the servants to cover with sheets, or counterpanes, or table-cloths, such a mountainous, such a "star-y-pointing" record of my past offences, lying in so conspicuous a situation! Men would not know my guilt merely, they would see it. But the reason why this form of the consequences, so much more than any other, stuck by my imagination was, that it connected itself with one of the Arabian Nights which had particularly interested myself and my sister. It was that tale, where a young porter, having his ropes about his person, had stumbled into the special "preserve" of some old magician. He finds a beautiful lady imprisoned, to whom (and not without prospects of success) he recommends himself as a suitor more in harmony with her own years than a withered magician. At this crisis, the magician returns. The young man bolts, and for that day successfully; but unluckily he leaves his ropes behind. Next morning he hears the magician, too honest by half, inquiring at the front door, with much expression of condoleance, for the unfortunate young man who had



lost his ropes in his own zenana. Upon this story I used to amuse my sister by ventriloquizing to the magician, from the lips of the trembling young man, — “O, Mr. Magician, these ropes cannot be mine! They are far too good; and one would n’t like, you know, to rob some other poor young man. If you please, Mr Magician, I never had money enough to buy so beautiful a set of ropes.” But argument is thrown away upon a magician, and off he sets on his travels with the young porter, not forgetting to take the ropes along with him.

Here now was the case, that had once seemed so impressive to me in a mere fiction from a far distant age and land, literally reproduced in myself. For, what did it matter whether a magician dunned one with old ropes for his engine of torture, or Stationers’ Hall with fifteen thousand volumes (in the rear of which there might also be ropes)? Should I have ventriloquized, would my sister have laughed, had either of us but guessed the possibility that I myself, and within one twelve months, and, alas! standing alone in the world as regarded *confidential* counsel, should repeat within my own inner experience the shadowy panic of the young Bagdat intruder upon the privacy of magicians? It appeared, then, that I had been reading a legend concerning myself in the *Arabian Nights*. I had been contemplated in types a thousand years before, on the banks of the Tigris. It was horror and grief that prompted that thought.

O, heavens! that the misery of a child should by possibility become the laughter of adults! — that even the sufferer, should be capable of amusing myself



as if it had been a jest, with what for three years had constituted the secret affliction of my life, and its eternal trepidation — like the ticking of a death-watch to patients lying awake in the plague! I durst ask no counsel; there was no one to ask. Possibly my sister could have given me none in a case which neither of us should have understood, and where to seek for information from others would have been at once to betray the whole reason for seeking it. But, if no advice, she would have given me her pity, and the expression of her endless love; and, with the relief of sympathy, that heals for a season all distresses, she would have given me that exquisite luxury — the knowledge that, having parted with my secret, yet also I had *not* parted with it, since it was in the power only of one that could much less betray me than I could betray myself. At this time, — that is, about the year when I suffered most, — I was reading Cæsar. O, laurelled scholar, sunbright intellect, “foremost man of all this world,” how often did I make out of thy immortal volume a pillow to support my wearied brow, as at evening, on my homeward road, I used to turn into some silent field where I might give way unobserved to the reveries which besieged me! I wondered, and found no end of wondering, at the revolution that one short year had made in my happiness. I wondered that such billows *could* overtake me. At the beginning of that year, how radiantly happy! At the end, how insupportably alone!

“Into what depth thou seest,  
From what height fallen.”

Forever I searched the abysses with some wandering

thoughts unintelligible to myself. Forever I dallied with some obscure notion, how my sister's love might be made in some dim way available for delivering me from misery; or else how the misery I had suffered and was suffering might be made, in some way equally dim, the ransom for winning back her love.

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Here pause, reader! Imagine yourself seated in some cloud-scaling swing, oscillating under the impulse of lunatic hands; for the strength of lunacy may belong to human dreams, the fearful caprice of lunacy, and the malice of lunacy, whilst the *victim* of those dreams may be all the more certainly removed from lunacy; even as a bridge gathers cohesion and strength from the increasing resistance into which it is forced by increasing pressure. Seated in such a swing, fast as you reach the lowest point of depression, may you rely on racing up to a starry altitude of corresponding ascent. Ups and downs you will see, heights and depths, in our fiery course together, such as will sometimes tempt you to look shyly and suspiciously at me, your guide, and the ruler of the oscillations. Here, at the point where I have called a halt, the reader has reached the lowest depths in my nursery afflictions. From that point, according to the principles of *art* which govern the movement of these Confessions, I had meant to launch him upwards through the whole arch of ascending visions which seemed requisite to balance the sweep downwards, so recently described in his course. But accidents of the press have made it impossible to accomplish this purpose in the present

month's journal. There is reason to regret that the advantages of position, which were essential to the full effect of passages planned for the equipoise and mutual resistance, have thus been lost. Meantime, upon the principle of the mariner, who rigs a *jury-mast* in default of his regular spars, I find my resource in a sort of "jury" peroration, not sufficient in the way of a balance by its *proportions*, but sufficient to indicate the *quality* of the balance which I had contemplated. He who has *really* read the preceding parts of these present Confessions will be aware that a stricter scrutiny of the past, such as was natural after the whole economy of the dreaming faculty had been convulsed beyond all precedents on record, led me to the conviction that not one agency, but two agencies, had coöperated to the tremendous result. The nursery experience had been the ally and the natural coëfficient of the opium. For that reason it was that the nursery experience has been narrated. Logically it bears the very same relation to the convulsions of the dreaming faculty as the opium. The idealizing tendency existed in the dream-theatre of my childhood; but the preternatural strength of its action and coloring was first developed after the confluence of the *two* causes. The reader must suppose me at Oxford; twelve years and a half are gone by; I am in the glory of youthful happiness: but I have now first tampered with opium; and now first the agitations of my childhood reöpened in strength, now first they swept in upon the brain with power, and the grandeur of recovered life, under the separate and the concurring inspirations of opium.

Once again, after twelve years' interval, the nursery

of my childhood expanded before me: my sister was moaning in bed; I was beginning to be restless with fears not intelligible to myself. Once again the nurse, but now dilated to colossal proportions, stood as upon some Grecian stage with her uplifted hand, and, like the superb Medea standing alone with her children in the nursery at Corinth,\* smote me senseless to the ground. Again I was in the chamber with my sister's corpse, again the pomps of life rose up in silence, the glory of summer, the frost of death. Dream formed itself mysteriously within dream; within these Oxford dreams remoulded itself continually the trance in my sister's chamber,—the blue heavens, the everlasting vault, the soaring billows, the throne steeped in the thought (but not the sight) of "Him that sate thereon;" the flight, the pursuit, the irrecoverable steps of my return to earth. Once more the funeral procession gathered; the priest in his white surplice stood waiting with a book in his hand by the side of an open grave, the sacristan with his shovel; the coffin sank; the *dust to dust* descended. Again I was in the church on a heavenly Sunday morning. The golden sunlight of God slept amongst the heads of his apostles, his martyrs, his saints; the fragment from the litany, the fragment from the clouds, awoke again the lawnly beds that went up to scale the heavens—awoke again the shadowy arms that moved downward to meet them. Once again arose the swell of the anthem the burst of the Hallelujah chorus, the storm, the trampling movement of the choral passion, the agita-

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\* Euripides.

tion of my own trembling sympathy, the tumult of the choir, the wrath of the organ. Once more I that wallowed, became he that rose up to the clouds. And now in Oxford all was bound up into unity; the first state and the last were melted into each other as in some sunny glorifying haze. For high above my own station hovered a gleaming host of heavenly beings surrounding the pillows of the dying children. And such beings sympathize equally with sorrow that grovels and with sorrow that soars. Such beings pity alike the children that are languishing in death, and the children that live only to languish in tears.

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#### THE PALIMPSEST.

You know perhaps, masculine reader, better than I can tell you, what is a *Palimpsest*. Possibly, you have one in your own library. But yet, for the sake of others who may *not* know, or may have forgotten, suffer me to explain it here, lest any female reader, who honors these papers with her notice, should tax me with explaining it once too seldom; which would be worse to bear than a simultaneous complaint from twelve proud men, that I had explained it three times too often. You therefore, fair reader, understand, that for *your* accommodation exclusively, I explain the meaning of this word. It is Greek; and our sex enjoys the office and privilege of standing counsel to yours, in all questions of Greek. We are, under favor, perpetual and

hereditary dragomans to you. So that if, by accident you know the meaning of a Greek word, yet by courtesy to us, your counsel learned in that matter, you will always seem *not* to know it.

A palimpsest, then, is a membrane or roll cleansed of its manuscript by reiterated successions.

What was the reason that the Greeks and the Romans had not the advantage of printed books? The answer will be, from ninety-nine persons in a hundred, — Because the mystery of printing was not then discovered. But this is altogether a mistake. The secret of printing must have been discovered many thousands of times before it was used, or *could* be used. The inventive powers of man are divine; and also his stupidity is divine, as Cowper so playfully illustrates in the slow development of the *sofa* through successive generations of immortal dulness. It took centuries of blockheads to raise a joint stool into a chair; and it required something like a miracle of genius, in the estimate of elder generations, to reveal the possibility of lengthening a chair into a *chaise-longue*, or a sofa. Yes, these were inventions that cost mighty throes of intellectual power. But still, as respects printing, and admirable as is the stupidity of man, it was really not quite equal to the task of evading an object which stared him in the face with so broad a gaze. It did not require an Athenian intellect to read the main secret of printing in many scores of processes which the ordinary uses of life were *daily* repeating. To say nothing of analogous artifices amongst various mechanic artisans, all that is essential in printing must have been known to every nation that struck coins and medals. Not therefore

any want of a printing art,—that is of an art for multiplying impressions,—but the want of a cheap material for *receiving* such impressions, was the obstacle to an introduction of printed books, even as early as Pisistratus. The ancients *did* apply printing to records of silver and gold; to marble, and many other substances cheaper than gold and silver, they did *not*, since each monument required a *separate* effort of inscription. Simply this defect it was of a cheap material for receiving impresses, which froze in its very fountains the early resources of printing.

Some twenty years ago, this view of the case was luminously expounded by Dr. Whately, the present Archbishop of Dublin, and with the merit, I believe, of having first suggested it. Since then, this theory has received indirect confirmation. Now, out of that original scarcity affecting all materials proper for durable books, which continued up to times comparatively modern, grew the opening for palimpsests. Naturally, when once a roll of parchment or of vellum had done its office, by propagating through a series of generations what once had possessed an interest for *them*, but which, under changes of opinion or of taste, had faded to their feelings or had become obsolete for their undertakings, the whole *membrana* or vellum skin, the two-fold product of human skill, costly material, and costly freight of thought, which it carried, drooped in value concurrently — supposing that each were inalienably associated to the other. Once it had been the impress of a human mind which stamped its value upon the vellum; the vellum, though costly, had contributed out a secondary element of value to the total result



At length, however, this relation between the vehicle and its freight has gradually been undermined. The vellum, from having been the setting of the jewel, has risen at length to be the jewel itself; and the burden of thought, from having given the chief value to the vellum, has now become the chief obstacle to its value; nay, has totally extinguished its value, unless it can be dissociated from the connection. Yet, if this unlinking *can* be effected, then, fast as the inscription upon the membrane is sinking into rubbish, the membrane itself is reviving in its separate importance; and, from bearing a ministerial value, the vellum has come at last to absorb the whole value.

Hence the importance for our ancestors that the separation *should* be effected. Hence it arose in the middle ages, as a considerable object for chemistry, to discharge the writing from the roll, and thus to make it available for a new succession of thoughts. The soil, if cleansed from what once had been hot-house plants, but now were held to be weeds, would be ready to receive a fresh and more appropriate crop. In that object the monkish chemist succeeded; but after a fashion which seems almost incredible, — incredible not as regards the extent of their success, but as regards the delicacy of restraints under which it moved, — so equally adjusted was their success to the immediate interests of that period, and to the reversionary objects of our own. They did the thing; but not so radically as to prevent us, their posterity, from *undoing* it. They expelled the writing sufficiently to leave a field for the new manuscript, and yet not sufficiently to make the traces of the elder manuscript irrecoverable for us



Could magic, could Hermes Trismegistus, have done more? What would you think, fair reader, of a problem such as this, — to write a book which should be sense for your own generation, nonsense for the next, should revive into sense for the next after that, but again become nonsense for the fourth; and so on by alternate successions, sinking into night or blazing into day, like the Sicilian river Arethusa, and the English river Mole; or like the undulating motions of a flattened stone which children cause to skim the breast of a river, now diving below the water, now grazing its surface, sinking heavily into darkness, rising buoyantly into light, through a long vista of alternations? Such a problem, you say, is impossible. But really it is a problem not harder apparently than — to bid a generation kill, but so that a subsequent generation may call back into life; bury, but so that posterity may command to rise again. Yet *that* was what the rude chemistry of past ages effected when coming into combination with the reaction from the more refined chemistry of our own. Had *they* been better chemists, had *we* been worse, the mixed result, namely, that, dying for *them*, the flower should revive for *us*, could not have been effected. They did the thing proposed to them: they did it effectually, for they founded upon it all that was wanted: and yet ineffectually, since we unravelled their work, effacing all above which they had superscribed; restoring all below which they had effaced.

Here, for instance, is a parchment which contained some Grecian tragedy, the Agamemnon of Æschylus, or the Phœnissæ of Euripides. This had possessed a *value* almost inappreciable in the eyes of accomplished

scholars, continually growing rarer through generations. But four centuries are gone by since the destruction of the Western Empire. Christianity, with towering grandeurs of another class, has founded a different empire; and some bigoted, yet perhaps holy monk, has washed away (as he persuades himself) the heather's tragedy, replacing it with a monastic legend; which legend is disfigured with fables in its incidents, and yet in a higher sense is true, because interwoven with Christian morals, and with the sublimest of Christian revelations. Three, four, five centuries more, find man still devout as ever; but the language has become obsolete, and even for Christian devotion a new era has arisen, throwing it into the channel of crusading zeal or of chivalrous enthusiasm. The *membrana* is wanted now for a knightly romance—for "my Cid," or *Cœur de Lion*; for Sir Tristrem, or *Lybæus Disconus*. In this way, by means of the imperfect chemistry known to the mediæval period, the same roll has served as a conservatory for three separate generations of flowers and fruits, all perfectly different, and yet all specially adapted to the wants of the successive possessors. The Greek tragedy, the monkish legend, the knightly romance, each has ruled its own period. One harvest after another has been gathered into the garner of man through ages far apart. And the same hydraulic machinery has distributed, through the same marble fountains, water, milk, or wine, according to the habits and training of the generations that came to quench their thirst.

Such were the achievements of rude monastic chemistry. But the more elaborate chemistry of our own

days has reversed all these motions of our simple ancestors, which results in every stage that to *them* would have realized the most fantastic amongst the promises of thaumaturgy. Insolent vaunt of Paracelsus, that he would restore the original rose or violet out of the ashes settling from its combustion — *that* is now rivalled in this modern achievement. The traces of each successive handwriting, regularly effaced, as had been imagined, have, in the inverse order, been regularly called back: the footsteps of the game pursued, wolf or stag, in each several chase, have been unlinked, and hunted back through all their doubles; and, as the chorus of the Athenian stage unwove through the antistrophe every step that had been mystically woven through the strophe, so, by our modern conjurations of science, secrets of ages remote from each other have been exorcised\* from the accumulated shadows of centuries. Chemistry, a witch as potent as the Erichtho of Lucanto (*Pharsalia*, lib. vi. or vii.), has extorted by her torments, from the dust and ashes of forgotten centuries, the secrets of a life extinct for the general eye, but still glowing in the embers. Even the fable of the Phœnix, that secular bird, who propagated his solitary existence, and his solitary births, along the line of centuries, through eternal relays of funeral mists, is but a type of what we have done with Palimpsests. We have backed

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\* Some readers may be apt to suppose, from all English experience, that the word *exorcise* means properly banishment to the shades. Not so. Citation *from* the shades, or sometimes the torturing coercion of mystic adjurations, is more truly the primary sense.

upon each phœnix in the long *regressus*, and forced him to expose his ancestral phœnix, sleeping in the ashes below his own ashes. Our good old forefathers would have been aghast at our sorceries; and, if they speculated on the propriety of burning Dr. Faustus *us* they would have burned by acclamation. Trial there would have been none; and they could not otherwise have satisfied their horror of the brazen profligacy marking our modern magic, than by ploughing up the houses of all who had been parties to it, and sowing the ground with salt.

Fancy not, reader, that this tumult of images, illustrative or allusive, moves under any impulse or purpose of mirth. It is but the coruscation of a restless understanding, often made ten times more so by irritation of the nerves, such as you will first learn to comprehend (its *how* and its *why*) some stage or two ahead. The image, the memorial, the record, which for me is derived from a palimpsest, as to one great fact in our human being, and which immediately I will show you, is but too repellent of laughter; or, even if laughter *had* been possible, it would have been such laughter as oftentimes is thrown off from the fields of ocean,\* laughter that hides, or that seems to

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\* "*Laughter from the fields of ocean.*" — Many readers will recall, though, at the moment of writing, my own thoughts did not recall, the well-known passage in the Prometheus —

— ποταίων τε κυμάτων  
 Ανηριθμόν γελάσηα.

Ὁ multitudinous laughter of the ocean billows!" It is not clear whether Æschylus contemplated the laughter as addressing the ear or the eye.

evade mustering tumult; foam-bells that weave garlands of phosphoric radiance for one moment round the eddies of gleaming abysses; mimicries of earth-born flowers that for the eye raise phantoms of gayety, as oftentimes for the ear they raise the echoes of fugitive laughter, mixing with the ravings and choir-voices of an angry sea.

What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? Such a palimpsest is my brain; such a palimpsest, oh reader! is yours. Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one has been extinguished. And if, in the vellum palimpsest, lying amongst the other *diplomata* of human archives or libraries, there is anything fantastic or which moves to laughter, as oftentimes there is in the grotesque collisions of those successive themes, having no natural connection, which by pure accident have consecutively occupied the roll, yet, in our own heaven-created palimpsest, the deep memorial palimpsest of the brain, there are not and cannot be such incoherencies. The fleeting accidents of a man's life, and its external shows, may indeed be irrelate and incongruous; but the organizing principles which fuse into harmony, and gather about fixed predetermined centres, whatever heterogeneous elements life may have accumulated from without, will not permit the grandeur of human unity greatly to be violated, or its ultimate repose to be troubled, in the retrospect from dying moments, or from other great convulsions.

Such a convulsion is the struggle of gradual suffe-

cation, as in drowning; and, in the original Opium Confessions, I mentioned a case of that nature communicated to me by a lady from her own childish experience. The lady is still living, though now of unusually great age; and I may mention that amongst her faults never was numbered any levity of principle, or carelessness of the most scrupulous veracity; but, on the contrary, such faults as arise from austerity, too harsh, perhaps, and gloomy indulgent neither to others nor herself. And, at the time of relating this incident, when already very old, she had become religious to asceticism. According to my present belief, she had completed her ninth year, when, playing by the side of a solitary brook, she fell into one of its deepest pools. Eventually, but after what lapse of time nobody ever knew, she was saved from death by a farmer, who, riding in some distant lane, had seen her rise to the surface; but not until she had descended within the abyss of death, and looked into its secrets, as far, perhaps, as ever human eye *can* have looked that had permission to return. At a certain stage of this descent, a blow seemed to strike her, phosphoric radiance sprang forth from her eyeballs; and immediately a mighty theatre expanded within her brain. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, every act, every design of her past life, lived again, arraying themselves not as a succession, but as parts of a coëxistence. Such a light fell upon the whole path of her life backwards 'nto the shades of infancy, as the light, perhaps, which wrapt the destined Apostle on his road to Damascus. Yet that light blinded for a season; but hers poured celestial vision upon the brain, so that her consciousness

became omnipresent at one moment to every feature in the infinite review.

This anecdote was treated sceptically at the time by some critics. But, besides that it has since been confirmed by other experience essentially the same, reported by other parties in the same circumstances, who had never heard of each other, the true point for astonishment is not the *simultaneity* of arrangement under which the past events of life, though in fact successive, had formed their dread line of revelation. This was but a secondary phenomenon; the deeper lay in the resurrection itself, and the possibility of resurrection, for what had so long slept in the dust. A pall, deep as oblivion, had been thrown by life over every trace of these experiences; and yet suddenly, at a silent command, at the signal of a blazing rocket sent up from the brain, the pall draws up, and the whole depths of the theatre are exposed. Here was the greater mystery: now this mystery is liable to no doubt; for it is repeated, and ten thousand times repeated, by opium, for those who are its martyrs.

Yes, reader, countless are the mysterious hand-writings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; and, like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the undissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each other in forgetfulness. But by the hour of death, but by fever, but by the searchings of opium, all these can revive in strength. They are not dead, but sleeping. In the illustration imagined by myself, from the case of some individual palimpsest, the Grecian tragedy had



seemed to be displaced, but was *not* displaced, by the monkish legend; and the monkish legend had seemed to be displaced, but was *not* displaced, by the knightly romance. In some potent convulsion of the system, all wheels back into its earliest elementary stage. The bewildering romance, light tarnished with darkness, the semi-fabulous legend, truth celestial mixed with human falsehoods, these fade even of themselves, as life advances. The romance has perished that the young man adored; the legend has gone that deluded the boy; but the deep, deep tragedies of infancy, as when the child's hands were unlinked forever from his mother's neck, or his lips forever from his sister's kisses, these remain lurking below all, and these lurk to the last. Alchemy there is none of passion or disease that can scorch away these immortal impresses; and the dream which closed the preceding section, together with the succeeding dreams of this (which may be viewed as in the nature of choruses winding up the overture contained in Part I.), are but illustrations of this truth, such as every man probably will meet experimentally who passes through similar convulsions of dreaming or delirium from any similar or equal disturbance in his nature.\*

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\*This, it may be said, requires a corresponding duration of experience but, as an argument for this mysterious power lurking in our nature, I may remind the reader of one phenomenon open to the notice of everybody, namely, the tendency of very aged persons to throw back and concentrate the light of their memory upon scenes of early childhood, as to which they recall many traces that had faded even to *themselves* in middle life, whilst they often forget altogether the whole intermediate stages of their experience. This shows that naturally, and without violent agencies the human brain is by tendency a palimpsest.



## LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW.

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, “Behold what is greater than yourselves!” This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a

prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *edūco*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallization of languages) from the word *edūco*, with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes*, or develops, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant, — not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works forever upon children, — resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering\* forever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader! think, — that children

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\* "*Glimmering.*" — As I have never allowed myself to covet any man's ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his, still less would it become a philosopher to covet other people's images, or metaphors. Here, therefore, I restore to Mr. Wordsworth this fine image of the revolving wheel, and the glimmering spokes, as applied by him to the flying successions of day and night. I borrowed it for one moment in order to point my own sentence; which being done, the reader is witness that I now pay it back instantly by a note made for that sole purpose. On the same principle I often borrow their seals from young ladies, when closing my letters. Because there is sure to be some tender sentiment upon them about "memory," or "hope," or "roses, or "reunion;" and my correspondent must be a sad brute who is not touched by the eloquence of the seal, even if his taste is so bad that he remains deaf to mine.

generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*,—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this world, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen, consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart: therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number, as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty: the *Parcæ* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colors sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and at once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I

know." The last words I say *now*; but in Oxford I said, "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark back-ground of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful sisters. These sisters — by what name shall we call them?

If I say simply, "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow, — separate cases of sorrow, — whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart; and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*. I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O, no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. *They* spoke not, as they talked with Levana; *they* whispered not; *they* sang not; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung: for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray

but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols; *mine* are the words.

What is it the sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form, and their presence; if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline; or presence it were that forever advanced to the front, or forever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation, — Rachel weeping for her children, and refused to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened forever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven.

Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard that sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her

girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sate all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, he recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns forever over *her*; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844-5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of her keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honor with the title of "Madonna."

The second sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban

droops forever, forever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister Madonna is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamors, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the visiter of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes forever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a step-mother,—as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered;\*—every

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\* This, the reader will be aware, applies chiefly to the cotton and tobacco States of North America; but not to them only: on which account I have not scrupled to figure the sun, which looks down upon slavery, as *tropical*; no matter if strictly within the tropics, or simply so near to them as to produce a similar climate



woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace,—all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third sister, who is also the youngest — ! Hush! whisper whilst we talk of *her*! Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybèle, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes rising so high *might* be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape which she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the motner of lunacies, and the suggestress of



suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with a tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum*,—Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai*, or Sublime Goddesses,\* these were the *Eumenides*, or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation) of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she beckoned to Our Lady of Sighs; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this:

“Lo! here is he, whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling Him I led astray, him I beguiled, and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by lan-

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\* “*Sublime Goddesses.*” — The word *σεμνος* is usually rendered *reuerable* in dictionaries; not a very nattering epithet for females. But by weighing a number of passages in which the word is used pointedly, I am disposed to think that it comes nearest to our idea of the *sublime*, as near as a Greek word could come.

guishing desires, that he worshipped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolator, I have seasoned for thee dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou,"—turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum*, she said,—“wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her*. See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope, wither the relenting of love, scorch the fountains of tears, curse him as only thou canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace, so shall he see the things that ought *not* to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had,—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit.”\*

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\*The reader, who wishes at all to understand the course of these Confessions, ought not to pass over this dream-legend. There is no great wonder that a vision, which occupied my waking thoughts in those years, should reappear in my dreams. It was, in fact, a legend recurring in sleep, most of which I had myself silently written or sculptured in my daylight reveries. But its importance to the present Confessions is this, that it rehearses or prefigures their course. This FIRST part belongs to Madonna. The THIRD belongs to the “*Mater Suspiriorum*,” and will be entitled *The Pariah Worlds*. The FOURTH, which terminates the work, belongs to the “*Mater Tenebrarum*,” and will be entitled *The Kingdom of Darkness*. As to the SECOND, it is an interpolation requisite to the effect of the others, and will be explained in its proper place.

## THE APPARITION OF THE BROCKEN.

ASCEND with me on this dazzling Whitsunday the Brocken of North Germany. The dawn opened in cloudless beauty; it is a dawn of bridal June; but, as the hours advanced, her youngest sister April, that sometimes cares little for racing across both frontiers of May, frets the bridal lady's sunny temper with sallies of wheeling and careering showers, flying and pursuing, opening and closing, hiding and restoring. On such a morning, and reaching the summits of the forest mountain about sunrise, we shall have one chance the more for seeing the famous Spectre of the Brocken.\* Who and what is he? He is a solitary

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\* "*Spectre of the Brocken.*"— This very striking phenomenon has been continually described by writers, both German and English for the last fifty years. Many readers, however, will not have met with these descriptions; and on *their* account I add a few words in explanation, referring them for the best scientific comment on the case to Sir David Brewster's "Natural Magic." The spectre takes the shape of a human figure, or, if the visitors are more than one, when the spectres multiply; they arrange themselves on the blue ground of the sky, or the dark ground of any clouds that may be in the right quarter, or perhaps they are strongly relieved against a curtain of rock, at a distance of some miles, and always exhibiting gigantic proportions. At first, from the distance and the colossal size, every spectator supposes the appearance to be quite independent of himself. But very soon he is surprised to observe his own actions and gestures mimicked; and wakens to the conviction that the phantom is but a dilated reflection of himself. This Titan amongst the apparitions of earth is exceedingly capricious, vanishing abruptly for reasons best known to himself, and more coy in coming forward than the Lady Echo of Ovid. One reason why he is seen so seldom must be ascribed to the concurrence of conditions under which only the phenomenon can be manifested; the sun must

apparition, in the sense of loving solitude; else he is not always solitary in his personal manifestations, but on proper occasions, has been known to unmask a strength quite sufficient to alarm those who had been insulting him.

Now, in order to test the nature of this mysterious apparition, we will try two or three experiments upon him. What we fear, and with some reason, is, that as he lived so many ages with foul Pagan sorcerers, and witnessed so many centuries of dark idolatries, his heart may have been corrupted; and that even now his faith may be wavering or impure. We will try.

Make the sign of the cross, and observe whether he repeats it (as on Whitsunday\* he surely ought to do).

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be near to the horizon (which of itself implies a time of day inconvenient to a person starting from a station as distant as Elbingerode); the spectator must have his back to the sun; and the air must contain some vapor, but *partially* distributed. Coleridge ascended the Brocken on the Whitsunday of 1799, with a party of English students from Goettingen, but failed to see the phantom; afterwards in England (and under the three same conditions) he saw a much rarer phenomenon, which he described in the following eight lines. I give them from a correct copy (the apostrophe in the beginning must be understood as addressed to an ideal conception):

“And art thou nothing? Such thou art as when  
 The woodman winding westward up the glen  
 At wintry dawn, when o'er the sheep-track's maze  
 The viewless snow-mist weaves a glistening haze,  
 Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
 An image with a glory round its head;  
 This shade he worships for its golden hues,  
 And *makes* (not knowing) that which he pursues.”

\* “*On Whitsunday.*” — It is singular, and perhaps owing to the temperature and weather likely to prevail in that early part of summer, that more appearances of the spectre have been witnessed on Whitsunday than on any other day.

Look! he *does* repeat it; but the driving showers perplex the images, and *that*, perhaps, it is which gives him the air of one who acts reluctantly or evasively. Now, again, the sun shines more brightly, and the showers have swept off like squadrons of cavalry to the rear. We will try him again.

Pluck an anemone, one of these many anemones which once was called the sorcerer's flower,\* and bore a part, perhaps, in this horrid ritual of fear; carry it to that stone which mimics the outline of a heathen altar, and once was called the sorcerer's altar;\* then bending your knee, and raising your right hand to God, say, — "Father, which art in heaven, this lovely anemone, that once glorified the worship of fear, has travelled back into thy fold; this altar, which once reeked with bloody rites to Cortho, has long been rebaptized into thy holy service. The darkness is gone; the cruelty is gone which the darkness bred; the moans have passed away which the victims uttered; the cloud has vanished which once sate continually upon their graves, cloud of protestation that ascended forever to thy throne from the tears of the defenceless, and the anger of the just. And lo! I thy servant, with this dark phantom, whom for one hour on this thy festival of Pentecost I make *my* servant, render thee united worship in this thy recovered temple."

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\* "*The sorcerer's flower*," and "*the sorcerer's altar*." — These are names still clinging to the anemone of the Brocken, and to an altar-shaped fragment of granite near one of the summits; and it is not doubted that they both connect themselves, through links of ancient tradition, with the gloomy realities of Paganism, when the whole Hartz and the Brocken formed for a very long time the last asylum to a ferocious but perishing idolatry.

Look now! the apparition plucks an anemone, and places it on an altar; he also bends his knee, he also raises his right hand to God. Dumb he is; but sometimes the dumb serve God acceptably. Yet still it occurs to you, that perhaps on this high festival of the Christian church he may be overruled by supernatural influence into confession of his homage, having so often been made to bow and bend his knee at murderous rites. In a service of religion he may be timid. Let us try him, therefore, with an earthly passion, where he will have no bias either from favor or from fear.

If, then, once in childhood you suffered an affection that was ineffable,—if once, when powerless to face such an enemy, you were summoned to fight with the tiger that couches within the separations of the grave,—in that case, after the example of Judæa (on the Roman coins),—sitting under her palm-tree to weep, but sitting with her head veiled,—do you also veil your head. Many years are passed away since then; and you were a little ignorant thing at that time, hardly above six years old; or perhaps (if you durst tell all the truth), not quite so much. But your heart was deeper than the Danube; and, as was your love, so was your grief. Many years are gone since that darkness settled on your head; many summers, many winters; yet still its shadows wheel round upon you at intervals, like these April showers upon this glory of bridal June. Therefore now, on this dovelike morning of Pentecost, do you veil your head like Judæa in memory of the transcendent woe, and in testimony that, indeed, it surpassed all utterance of words. Immediately you see

that the apparition of the Brocken veils *his* head, after the model of Judæa weeping under her palm-tree, as if he also had a human heart, and that *he* also, in childhood, having suffered an affliction which was ineffable, wished by these mute symbols to breathe a sigh towards heaven in memory of that affliction, and by way of record, though many a year after, that it was indeed unutterable by words.

This trial is decisive. You are now satisfied that the apparition is but a reflex of yourself; and, in uttering your secret feelings to *him*, you make this phantom the dark symbolic mirror for reflection to the daylight what else must be hidden forever

Such a relation does the Dark Interpreter, whom immediately the reader will learn to know as an intruder into my dreams, bear to my own mind. He is originally a mere reflex of my inner nature. But as the apparition of the Brocken sometimes is disturbed by storms or by driving showers, so as to dissemble his real origin, in like manner the Interpreter sometimes swerves out of my orbit, and mixes a little with alien natures. I do not always know him in these cases as my own parhelion. What he says, generally, is but that which *I* have said in daylight, and in meditation deep enough to sculpture itself on my heart. But sometimes, as his face alters, his words alter; and they do not always seem such as I have used, or *could* use. No man can account for all things that occur in dreams. Generally I believe this,—that he is a faithful representative of myself; but he also is at times subject to the action of the good *Phantasia*, who rules in dreams.



Hailstone choruses\* besides, and storms, enter my dreams. Hailstones and fire that run along the ground sleet and blinding hurricanes, revelations of glory insufferable pursued by volleying darkness, — these are powers able to disturb any features that originally were but shadow, and so send drifting the anchors of any vessel that rides upon deeps so treacherous as those of dreams. Understand, however, the Interpreter to bear generally the office of a tragic chorus at Athens. The Greek chorus is perhaps not quite understood by critics, any more than the Dark Interpreter by myself. But the leading function of both must be supposed this — not to tell you anything absolutely new, — *that* was done by the actors in the drama; but to recall you to your own lurking thoughts, — hidden for the moment or imperfectly developed, — and to place before you, in immediate connection with groups vanishing too quickly for any effort of meditation on your own part, such commentaries, prophetic or looking back, pointing the moral or deciphering the mystery, justifying Providence, or mitigating the fierceness of anguish, as would or might have occurred to your own meditative heart, had only time been allowed for its motions.

The Interpreter is anchored and stationary in my dreams; but great storms and driving mists cause him to fluctuate uncertainly, or even to retire altogether, like his gloomy counterpart, the shy phantom of the Brocken, — and to assume new features or strange

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\* ‘*Hailstone choruses.*’ — I need not tell any lover of Handel that his oratorio of “Israel in Egypt” contains a chorus familiar known by this name. The words are: “And he gave them hail stones for rain; fire, mingled with hail, ran along upon the ground



features, as in dreams always there is a power not contented with reproduction, but which absolutely creates or transforms. This dark being the reader will see again in a further stage of my opium experience; and I warn him that he will not always be found sitting inside my dreams, but at times outside, and in open daylight

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#### FINALE TO PART I.—SAVANNAH-LA-MAR.

GOD smote Savannah-la-mar, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of ocean. And God said,—“Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries: this city I will bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of my mysterious anger, set in azure light through generations to come; for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of my tropic seas.” This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucent atmosphere of water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates, and number the spires of her churches. She is one ample cemetery, and *has* been for many a year; but in the mighty calms that brood for weeks over tropic latitudes he fascinates the eye with a *Fata-Morgana* revelation,

ns of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air.

Thither, lured by the loveliness of cerulean depths by the peace of human dwellings privileged from molestation, by the gleam of marble altars sleeping in everlasting sanctity, oftentimes in dreams did I and the Dark Interpreter cleave the watery veil that divided us from her streets. We looked into the belfries, where the pendulous bells were waiting in vain for the summons which should awaken their marriage peals; together we touched the mighty organ-keys, that sang no *jubilates* for the ear of Heaven, that sang no requiems for the ear of human sorrow; together we searched the silent nurseries, where the children were all asleep, and *had* been asleep through five generations. "They are waiting for the heavenly dawn," whispered the Interpreter to himself: "and, when *that* comes, the bells and the organs will utter a *jubilate* repeated by the echoes of Paradise." Then, turning to me, he said,—"This is sad, this is piteous; but less would not have sufficed for the purpose of God. Look here. Put into a Roman clepsydra one hundred drops of water; let these run out as the sands in an hour-glass; every drop measuring the hundredth part of a second, so that each shall represent but the three-hundred-and-sixty-thousandth part of an hour. Now, count the drops as they race along; and, when the fiftieth of the hundred is passing, behold! forty-nine are not, because already they have perished; and fifty are not, because they are yet to come. You see therefore, how narrow, how incalculably narrow, is the true and actual present. Of that time which we call

The present, hardly a hundredth part but belongs either to a past which has fled, or to a future which is still on the wing. It has perished, or it is not born. It was, or it is not. Yet even this approximation to the truth is *infinitely* false. For again subdivide that solitary drop, which only was found to represent the present into a longer series of similar fractions, and the actual present which you arrest measures now but the thirty-sixth-millionth of an hour; and so by infinite declensions the true and very present, in which only we live and enjoy, will vanish into a mote of a mote, distinguishable only by a heavenly vision. Therefore the present, which only man possesses, offers less capacity for his footing than the slenderest film that ever spider twisted from her womb. Therefore, also, even this incalculable shadow from the narrowest pencil of moonlight is more transitory than geometry can measure, or thought of angel can overtake. The time which *is* contracts into a mathematic point; and even that point perishes a thousand times before we can utter its birth. All is finite in the present; and even that finite is infinite in its velocity of flight towards death. But in God there is nothing finite; but in God there is nothing transitory; but in God there *can* be nothing that tends to death. Therefore, it follows, that for God there can be no present. The future is the present of God, and to the future it is that he sacrifices the human present. Therefore it is that he works by earthquake. Therefore it is that he works by grief. O, deep is the ploughing of earthquake! O, deep"—[and his voice swelled like a *sanctus* rising from the choir of a cathedral]—  
 O, deep is the ploughing of grief! But oftentimes

less would not suffice for the agriculture of God. Upon a night of earthquake he builds a thousand years of pleasant habitations for man. Upon the sorrow of an infant he raises oftentimes from human intellects glorious vintages that could not else have been. Less than these fierce ploughshares would not have stirred the stubborn soil. The one is needed for earth, our planet. — for earth itself as the dwelling-place of man; but the other is needed yet oftener for God's mightiest instrument, — yes" [and he looked solemnly at myself], 'is needed for the mysterious children of the earth!'

## PART II.

## VISION OF LIFE.

THE Oxford visions, of which some have been given, were but anticipations necessary to illustrate the glimpse opened of childhood (as being its reaction). In this SECOND part, returning from that anticipation, I retrace an abstract of my boyish and youthful days, so far as they furnished or exposed the germs of later experiences in worlds more shadowy.

Upon me, as upon others scattered thinly by tens and twenties over every thousand years, fell too powerfully and too early the vision of life. The horror of life mixed itself already in earliest youth with the heavenly sweetness of life; that grief, which one in a hundred has sensibility enough to gather from the sad retrospect of life in its closing stage, for me shed its dews as a prelibation upon the fountains of life whilst yet sparkling to the morning sun. I saw from afar and from before what I was to see from behind. Is this the description of an early youth passed in the shades of gloom? No; but of a youth passed in the divinest happiness. And if the reader has (which so few have) the passion, without which there is no reading of the legend and superscription upon man's brow, if he is not (as most are) deaf as the grave to every *deep* note that sighs upwards from the Delphic caves of human life, he will know that the rapture of life (or

anything which by approach can merit that name) does not arise, unless as perfect music arises, music of Mozart or Beethoven, by the confluence of the mighty and terrific discords with the subtile concords. Not by contrast, or as reciprocal foils, do these elements act, which is the feeble conception of many, but by union. They are the sexual forces in music: "male and female created he them;" and these mighty antagonists do not put forth their hostilities by repulsion, but by deepest attraction.

As "in to-day already walks to-morrow," so in the past experience of a youthful life may be seen dimly the future. The collisions with alien interests or hostile views, of a child, boy, or very young man, so insulated as each of these is sure to be, — those aspects of opposition which such a person *can* occupy, — are limited by the exceedingly few and trivial lines of connection along which he is able to radiate any essential influence whatever upon the fortunes or happiness of others. Circumstances may magnify his importance for the moment; but, after all, any cable which he carries out upon other vessels is easily slipped upon a feud arising. Far otherwise is the state of relations connecting an adult or responsible man with the circles around him, as life advances. The net-work of these relations is a thousand times more intricate, the jarring of these intricate relations a thousand times more frequent, and the vibrations a thousand times harsher which these jarrings diffuse. This truth is felt beforehand misgivingly and in troubled vision, by a young man who stands upon the threshold of manhood. One earliest instinct of fear and horror would darken his spirit, if it

could be revealed to itself and self-questioned at the moment of birth: a second instinct of the same nature would again pollute that tremulous mirror, if the moment were as punctually marked as physical birth is marked, which dismisses him finally upon the tides of absolute self-control. A dark ocean would seem the total expanse of life from the first; but far darker and more appalling would seem that interior and second chamber of the ocean which called him away forever from the direct accountability of others. Dreadful would be the morning which should say, "Be thou a human child incarnate;" but more dreadful the morning which should say, "Bear thou henceforth the sceptre of thy self-dominion through life, and the passion of life!" Yes, dreadful would be both; but without a basis of the dreadful there is no perfect rapture. It is a part through the sorrow of life, growing out of dark events, that this basis of awe and solemn darkness slowly accumulates. *That* I have illustrated. But, as life expands, it is more through the *strife* which besets us, strife from conflicting opinions, positions, passions, interests, that the funereal ground settles and deposits itself, which sends upward the dark lustrous brilliancy through the jewel of life, else revealing a pale and superficial glitter. Either the human being must suffer and struggle as the price of a more searching vision, or his gaze must be shallow, and without intellectual revelation.

Through accident it was in part, and, where through no accident but my own nature, not through features of it at all painful to recollect, that constantly in early life (that is, from boyish days until eighteen, when, by going to Oxford, practically I became my own master) I was

engaged in duels of fierce continual struggle, with some person or body of persons, that sought, like the Roman *retiaris*, to throw a net of deadly coercion or constraint over the undoubted rights of my natural freedom. The steady rebellion upon my part in one half was a mere human reaction of justifiable indignation; but in the other half it was the struggle of a conscientious nature, — disdaining to feel it as any mere right or discretionary privilege, — no, feeling it as the noblest of duties to resist, though it should be mortally, those that would have enslaved me, and to retort scorn upon those that would have put my head below their feet. Too much, even in later life, I have perceived, in men that pass for good men, a disposition to degrade (and if possible to degrade through self-degradation) those in whom unwillingly they feel any weight of oppression to themselves, by commanding qualities of intellect or character. They respect you: they are compelled to do so, and they hate to do so. Next, therefore, they seek to throw off the sense of this oppression, and to take vengeance for it, by cooperating with any unhappy accidents in your life, to inflict a season of humiliation upon you, and (if possible) to force you into becoming a consenting party to that humiliation. O, wherefore is it that those who presume to call themselves the “friends” of this man or that woman are so often those, above all others, whom in the hour of death that man or woman is most likely to salute with the valediction — Would God I had never seen your face?

In citing one or two cases of these early struggles, I have chiefly in view the effect of these upon my subsequent vicissitudes under the reign of opium. And this indul



gent reflection should accompany the mature reader through all such records of boyish inexperience. A good-tempered man, who is also acquainted with the world, will easily evade, without needing any artifice of servile obsequiousness, those quarrels which an upright simplicity, jealous of its own rights, and unpractised in the science of worldly address, cannot always evade without some loss of self-respect. Suavity in this manner may, it is true, be reconciled with firmness in the matter; but not easily by a young person who wants all the appropriate resources of knowledge, of adroit and guarded language, for making his good temper available. Men are protected from insult and wrong, not merely by their own skill, but also, in the absence of any skill at all, by the general spirit of forbearance to which society has trained all those whom they are likely to meet. But boys meeting with no such forbearance or training in other boys, must sometimes be thrown upon feuds in the ratio of their own firmness, much more than in the ratio of any natural proneness to quarrel. Such a subject, however, will be best illustrated by a sketch or two of my own principal feuds.

The first, but merely transient and playful, nor worth noticing at all, but for its subsequent resurrection under other and awful coloring in my dreams, grew out of an imaginary slight, as I viewed it, put upon me by one of my guardians. I had four guardians; and the one of these who had the most knowledge and talent of the whole—a banker, living about a hundred miles from my home—had invited me, when eleven years old, to his nouse. His eldest daughter, perhaps a year younger than myself, wore at that time upon her very lovely

face the most angelic expression of character and temper that I have almost ever seen. Naturally, I fell in love with her. It seems absurd to say so; and the more so, because two children more absolutely innocent than we were cannot be imagined, neither of us having ever been at any school; but the simple truth is, that in the most chivalrous sense I was in love with her. And the proof that I was so showed itself in three separate modes: I kissed her glove on any rare occasion when I found it lying on a table; secondly, I looked out for some excuse to be jealous of her; and, thirdly, I did my very best to get up a quarrel. What I wanted the quarrel for was the luxury of a reconciliation; a hill cannot be had, you know, without going to the expense of a valley. And though I hated the very thought of a moment's difference with so truly gentle a girl, yet how, but through such a purgatory, could one win the paradise of her returning smiles? All this, however, came to nothing; and simply because she positively would *not* quarrel. And the jealousy fell through, because there was no decent subject for such a passion, unless it had settled upon an old music-master, whom lunacy itself could not adopt as a rival. The quarrel, meantime, which never prospered with the daughter, silently kindled on my part towards the father. His offence was this. At dinner, I naturally placed myself by the side of M., and it gave me great pleasure to touch her hand at intervals. As M. was my cousin, though twice or even three times removed, I did not feel it taking too great a liberty in this little act of tenderness. No matter if three thousand times removed, I said, my cousin is my cousin; nor had I very much designed to conceal the

act; or if so, rather on her account than my own. One evening, however, papa observed my manœuvre. Did he seem displeased? Not at all; he even condescended to smile. But the next day he placed M. on the side opposite to myself. In one respect this was really an improvement, because it gave me a better view of my cousin's sweet countenance. But then there was the loss of the hand to be considered, and secondly there was the affront. It was clear that vengeance must be had. Now, there was but one thing in this world that I could do even decently; but *that* I could do admirably. This was writing Latin hexameters. Juvenal — though it was not very much of him that I had then read — seemed to me a divine model. The inspiration of wrath spoke through him as through a Hebrew prophet. The same inspiration spoke now in me. *Facit indignatio versum*, said Juvenal. And it must be owned that indignation has never made such good verses since as she did in that day. But still, even to me, this agile passion proved a Muse of genial inspiration for a couple of paragraphs; and one line I will mention as worthy to have taken its place in Juvenal himself. I say this without scruple, having not a shadow of vanity, nor, on the other hand, a shadow of false modesty connected with such boyish accomplishments. The poem opened thus:

Te nemis austerum sacræ qui fœdera mensæ  
Diruis, insector Satyræ reboante flagello."

But the line which I insist upon as of Roman strength was the closing one of the next sentence. The general effect of the sentiment was, that my clamorous wrath

should make its way even into ears that were past hearing :

“——— mea sæva quere.a  
Auribus insidet ceratis, auribus etsi  
Non audituris hybernâ nocte procellam.”

The power, however, which inflated my verse, soon collapsed ; having been soothed, from the very first, by finding, that except in this one instance at the dinner-table, which probably had been viewed as an indecorum, no further restraint, of any kind whatever, was meditated upon my intercourse with M. Besides, it was too painful to lock up good verses in one's own solitary breast. Yet how could I shock the sweet filial heart of my cousin by a fierce lampoon or *stylites* against her father, had Latin even figured amongst her accomplishments? Then it occurred to me that the verses might be shown to the father. But was there not something treacherous in gaining a man's approbation under a mask to a satire upon himself? Or would he have always understood me? For one person, a year after, took the *sacræ mensæ* (by which I had meant the sanctities of hospitality) to mean the sacramental table. And on consideration, I began to suspect that many people would pronounce myself the party who had violated the holy ties of hospitality, which are equally binding on guest as on host. Indolence, which sometimes comes in aid of good impulses as well as bad, favored these relenting thoughts. The society of M. did still more to wean me from further efforts of satire ; and, finally, my Latin poem remained a *orso*. But, upon the whole, my guardian had a narrow escape of descending to posterity in a disadvan-

ageous light, had he rolled down to it through my hexameters.

Here was a case of merely playful feud. But the same talent of Latin verses soon after connected me with a real feud, that harassed my mind more than would be supposed, and precisely by this agency, namely, that it arrayed one set of feelings against another. It divided my mind, as by domestic feud, against itself. About a year after returning from the visit to my guardian's, and when I must have been nearly completing my twelfth year, I was sent to a great public school. Every man has reason to rejoice who enjoys so great an advantage. I condemned, and *do* condemn, the practice of sometimes sending out into such stormy exposures those who are as yet too young, too dependent on female gentleness, and endowed with sensibilities too exquisite. But at nine or ten the masculine energies of the character are beginning to be developed; or if not, no discipline will better aid in their development than the bracing intercourse of a great English classical school. Even the selfish are forced into accommodating themselves to a public standard of generosity, and the effeminate into conforming to a rule of manliness. I was myself at two public schools; and I think with gratitude of the benefit which I reaped from both; as also I think with gratitude of the upright guardian in whose quiet household I learned Latin so effectually. But the small private schools which I witnessed for brief periods, containing thirty to forty boys, were models of ignoble manners as respected some part of the juniors, and of favoritism amongst the masters. Nowhere is the sublimity of public jus-

tice so broadly exemplified as in an English school. There is not in the universe such an areopagus for fault-play, and abhorrence of all crooked ways, as an English mob, or one of the English time-honored public schools. But my own first introduction to such an establishment was under peculiar and contradictory circumstances. When my "rating," or graduation in the school, was to be settled, naturally my altitude (to speak astronomically) was taken by the proficiency in Greek. But I could then barely construe books so easy as the Greek Testament and the Iliad. This was considered quite well enough for my age; but still it caused me to be placed three steps below the highest rank in the school. Within one week, however, my talent for Latin verses, which had by this time gathered strength and expansion, became known. I was honored as never was man or boy since Mordecai the Jew. Not properly belonging to the flock of the head master, but to the leading section of the second, I was now weekly paraded for distinction at the supreme tribunal of the school; out of which at first grew nothing but a sunshine of approbation delightful to my heart, still brooding upon solitude. Within six weeks this had changed. The approbation, indeed, continued, and the public testimony of it. Neither would there, in the ordinary course, have been any painful reaction from jealousy, or fretful resistance to the soundness of my pretensions; since it was sufficiently known to some of my school-fellows, that I, who had no male relatives but military men, and those in India, could not have benefited by any clandestine aid. But, unhappily, the head master was at that time dissatisfied with some points in

the progress of his lead form; and, as it soon appeared, was continually throwing in their teeth the brilliancy of my verses at twelve, by comparison with theirs at seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen. I had observed him sometimes pointing to myself; and was perplexed at seeing this gesture followed by gloomy looks, and what French reporters call "sensation," in these young men, whom naturally I viewed with awe as my leaders, boys that were called young men, men that were reading Sophocles — (a name that carried with it the sound of something seraphic to my ears), — and who never had vouchsafed to waste a word on such a child as myself. The day was come, however, when all that would be changed. One of these leaders strode up to me in the public play-grounds, and delivering a blow on my shoulder, which was not intended to hurt me, but as a mere formula of introduction, asked me "What the d—! I meant by bolting out of the course, and annoying other people in that manner? Were other people to have no rest for me and my verses, which, after all, were horribly bad?" There might have been some difficulty in returning an answer to this address, but none was required. I was briefly admonished to see that I wrote worse for the future, or else —. At this *aposiopesis*, I looked inquiringly at the speaker, and he filled up the chasm by saying that he would "annihilate" me. Could any person fail to be aghast at such a demand? I was to write worse than my own standard, which, by his account of my verses, must be difficult; and I was to write worse than himself, which might be impossible. My feelings revolted, it may be supposed against so arrogant a demand, unless it had



been far otherwise expressed; and on the next occasion for sending up verses, so far from attending to the orders issued, I double-shotted my guns; double applause descended on myself; but I remarked, with some awe though not repenting of what I had done, that double confusion seemed to agitate the ranks of my enemies. Amongst them loomed out in the distance my "annihilating" friend, who shook his huge fist at me, but with something like a grim smile about his eyes. He took an early opportunity of paying his respects to me, saying, "You little devil, do you call this writing your worst?" "No," I replied; "I call it writing my best." The annihilator, as it turned out, was really a good-natured young man; but he soon went off to Cambridge; and with the rest, or some of them, I continued to wage war for nearly a year. And yet, for a word spoken with kindness, I would have resigned the peacock's feather in my cap as the merest of baubles. Undoubtedly praise sounded sweet in my ears also. But that was nothing by comparison with what stood on the other side. I detested distinctions that were connected with mortification to others. And, even if I could have got over *that*, the eternal feud fretted and tormented my nature. Love, that once in childhood had been so mere a necessity to me, *that* had long been a mere reflected ray from a departed sunset. But peace, and freedom from strife, if love were no longer possible (as so rarely it is in this world), was the absolute necessity of my heart. To contend with somebody was still my fate; how to escape the contention I could not see; and yet for itself, and the deadly passions into which it forced me, I hated and



oathed it more than death. It added to the distraction and internal feud of my own mind, that I could not *altogether* condemn the upper boys. I was made a handle of humiliation to them. And, in the mean time, if I had an advantage in one accomplishment, which is all a matter of accident, or peculiar taste and feeling, they, on the other hand, had a great advantage over me in the more elaborate difficulties of Greek, and of choral Greek poetry. I could not altogether wonder at their hatred of myself. Yet still, as they had chosen to adopt this mode of conflict with me, I did not feel that I had any choice but to resist. The contest was terminated for me by my removal from the school, in consequence of a very threatening illness affecting my head; but it lasted nearly a year, and it did not close before several amongst my public enemies had become my private friends. They were much older, but they invited me to the houses of their friends, and showed me a respect which deeply affected me, — this respect having more reference, apparently, to the firmness I had exhibited, than to the splendor of my verses. And, indeed, these had rather drooped, from a natural accident; several persons of my own class had formed the practice of asking me to write verses for *them*. I could not refuse. But, as the subjects given out were the same for all of us, it was not possible to take so many crops off the ground without starving the quality of all.

Two years and a half from this time, I was again at a public school of ancient foundation. Now I was myself one of the three who formed the highest class. Now I myself was familiar with Sophocles, who once

had been so shadowy a name in my ear. But, strange to say, now, in my sixteenth year, I cared nothing at all for the glory of Latin verse. All the business of school was light and trivial in my eyes. Costing me not an effort, it could not engage any part of my attention; that was now swallowed up altogether by the literature of my native land. I still revered the Grecian drama, as always I must. But else I cared little then for classical pursuits. A deeper spell had mastered me; and I lived only in those bowers where deeper passions spoke.

Here, however, it was that began another and more important struggle. I was drawing near to seventeen, and, in a year after *that*, would arrive the usual time for going to Oxford. To Oxford my guardians made no objection; and they readily agreed to make the allowance then universally regarded as the *minimum* for an Oxford student, namely, £200 per annum. But they insisted, as a previous condition, that I should make a positive and definite choice of a profession. Now, I was well aware, that, if I *did* make such a choice, no law existed, nor could any obligation be created through deeds or signature, by which I could finally be compelled into keeping my engagement. But this evasion did not suit me. Here, again, I felt indignantly that the principle of the attempt was unjust. The object was certainly to do me service by saving money, since, if I selected the bar as my profession, it was contended by some persons (misinformed however), that not Oxford, but a special pleader's office, would be my proper destination; but I cared not for arguments of that sort. Oxford I was determined to

make my home; and also to bear my future course utterly untrammelled by promises that I might repent. Soon came the catastrophe of this struggle. A little before my seventeenth birth-day, I walked off, one lovely summer morning, to North Wales, rambled there for months, and, finally, under some obscure hopes of raising money on my personal security, I went up to London. Now I was in my eighteenth year, and during this period it was that I passed through that trial of severe distress, of which I gave some account in my former Confessions. Having a motive, however, for glancing backwards briefly at that period in the present series, I will do so at this point.

I saw in one journal an insinuation that the incidents in the *preliminary* narrative were possibly without foundation. To such an expression of mere gratuitous malignity, as it happened to be supported by no one argument, except a remark, apparently absurd, but certainly false, I did not condescend to answer. In reality, the possibility had never occurred to me that any person of judgment would seriously suspect me of taking liberties with that part of the work, since, though no one of the parties concerned but myself stood in so central a position to the circumstances as to be acquainted with *all* of them, many were acquainted with each separate section of the memoir. Relays of witnesses might have been summoned to mount guard, as it were, upon the accuracy of each particular in the whole succession of incidents; and some of these people had an interest, more or less strong, in exposing any deviation from the strictest *letter* of the truth, had it been in their power to do so. It is now

twenty-two years since I saw the objection here alluded to, and in saying that I did not condescend to notice it, the reader must not find any reason for taxing me with a blamable haughtiness. But every man is entitled to be haughty when his veracity is impeached; and still more when it is impeached by a dishonest objection, or, if not *that*, by an objection which argues a carelessness of attention almost amounting to dishonesty, in a case where it was meant to sustain an imputation of falsehood. Let a man read carelessly, if he will, but not where he is meaning to use his reading for a purpose of wounding another man's honor. Having thus, by twenty-two years' silence, sufficiently expressed my contempt for the slander,\* I now feel myself at liberty to draw it into notice, for the sake, *inter alia*, of showing in how rash a spirit malignity often works. In the preliminary account of certain boyish adventures which had exposed me to suffering of a kind not commonly incident to persons in my station in life, and leaving behind a temptation to the use of opium under certain arrears of weakness I had occasion to notice a disreputable attorney in London, who showed me some attentions, partly on my

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\* Being constantly almost an absentee from London, and very often from other great cities, so as to command oftentimes no favorable opportunities for overlooking the great mass of public journals, it is possible enough that other slanders of the same tenor may have existed. I speak of what met my own eye, or was accidentally reported to me; but, in fact, all of us are exposed to this evil of calumnies lurking unseen, for no degree of energy, and no excess of disposable time, would enable any man to exercise this sort of vigilant police over *all* journals. Better, therefore, tranquilly to leave all such malice to confound itself.

own account as a boy of some expectations, but much more with the purpose of fastening his professional grappling-hooks upon the young Earl of A——t,<sup>41</sup> my former companion, and my present correspondent. This man's house was slightly described, and, with more minuteness, I had exposed some interesting traits in his household economy. A question, therefore, naturally arose in several people's curiosity — Where was this house situated? and the more so because I had pointed a renewed attention to it by saying, that on that very evening (namely, the evening on which that particular page of the Confessions was written) I had visited the street, looked up at the windows, and, instead of the gloomy desolation reigning there when myself and a little girl were the sole nightly tenants, — sleeping, in fact (poor freezing creatures that we both were), on the floor of the attorney's law-chamber, and making a pillow out of his infernal parchments, — I had seen, with pleasure, the evidences of comfort, respectability, and domestic animation, in the lights and stir prevailing through different stories of the house. Upon this, the upright critic told his readers that I had described the house as standing in Oxford-street, and then appealed to their own knowledge of that street whether such a house could be *so* situated. Why not — he neglected to tell us. The houses at the east end of Oxford-street are certainly of too small an order to *meet* my account of the attorney's house; but why should it be at the east end? Oxford-street is a mile and a quarter long, and, being built continuously on both sides, finds room for houses of *many* classes. Meantime it happens that, although the true house was

most obscurely indicated, *any* house whatever in Oxford-street was most luminously excluded. In all the immensity of London there was but one single street that could be challenged by an attentive reader of the Confessions as peremptorily *not* the street of the attorney's house, and *that* one was Oxford-street; for, in speaking of my own renewed acquaintance with the outside of this house, I used some expression implying that, in order to make such a visit of reconnoissance, I had turned *aside* from Oxford-street. The matter is a perfect trifle in itself, but it is no trifle in a question affecting a writer's accuracy. If in a thing so absolutely impossible to be forgotten as the true situation of a house painfully memorable to a man's feelings, from being the scene of boyish distresses the most exquisite, nights passed in the misery of cold, and hunger preying upon him, both night and day, in a degree which very many would not have survived, — he, when retracing his school-boy annals, could have shown indecision, even far more dreaded inaccuracy, in identifying the house, — not one syllable after *that*, which he could have said on any other subject, would have won any confidence, or deserved any, from a judicious reader. I may now mention — the Herod being dead whose persecutions I had reason to fear — that the house in question stands in Greek street on the west, and is the house on that side nearest to Soho-square, but without looking into the square. This it was hardly safe to mention at the date of the published Confessions. It was my private opinion, indeed, that there were probably twenty-five chances to one in favor of my friend the attorney

having been by that time hanged. But then this argued inversely; one chance to twenty-five that my friend might be *unhanged*, and knocking about the streets of London; in which case it would have been a perfect god-send to him that here lay an opening (of *my* contrivance, not *his*) for requesting the opinion of a jury on the amount of *solatium* due to his wounded feelings in an action on the passage in the Confessions. To have indicated even the street would have been enough; because there could surely be but one such Grecian in Greek-street, or but one that realized the other conditions of the unknown quantity. There was also a separate danger not absolutely so laughable as it sounds. Me there was little chance that the attorney should meet; but my book he might easily have met (supposing always that the warrant of *Sus. per coll.* had not yet on *his* account travelled down to Newgate). For he was literary; admired literature; and, as a lawyer, he wrote on some subjects fluently; might he not publish *his* Confessions? Or, which would be worse, a supplement to mine, printed so as exactly to match? In which case I should have had the same affliction that Gibbon the historian dreaded so much, namely, that of seeing a refutation of himself, and his own answer to the refutation, all bound up in one and the same self-combating volume. Besides, he would have cross-examined me before the public, in Old Bailey style; no story, the most straightforward that ever was told, could be sure to stand *that*. And my readers might be left in a state of painful doubt, whether *he* might not, after all, have been a model of suffering innocence — I (to say the kindest thing pos



sible) plagued with the natural treacheries of a school-boy's memory. In taking leave of this case and the remembrances connected with it, let me say that, although really believing in the probability of the attorney's having at least found his way to Australia, I had no satisfaction in thinking of that result. I knew my friend to be the very perfection of a scamp. And in the running account between us (I mean, in the ordinary sense, as to money), the balance could not be in *his* favor; since I, on receiving a sum of money (considerable in the eyes of us both), had transferred pretty nearly the whole of it to *him*, for the purpose ostensibly held out to me (but of course a hoax) of purchasing certain law "stamps;" for he was then pursuing a diplomatic correspondence with various Jews who lent money to young heirs, in some trifling proportion on my own insignificant account, but much more truly on the account of Lord A——t, my young friend. On the other side, he had given to me simply the relics of his breakfast-table, which itself was hardly more than a relic. But in this he was not to blame. He could not give to me what he had not for himself, nor sometimes for the poor starving child whom I now suppose to have been his illegitimate caugther. So desperate was the running fight, yard-arm to yard-arm, which he maintained with creditors fierce as famine and hungry as the grave, — so deep also was his horror (I know not for which of the various reasons supposable) against falling into a prison, — that he seldom ventured to sleep twice successively in the same house. That expense of itself must have pressed heavily in London, where you pay half a crown at least



for a bed that would cost only a shilling in the provinces. In the midst of his knaveries, and, what were even more shocking to my remembrance, his confidential discoveries in his rambling conversations of knavish *designs* (not always pecuniary), there was a light of wandering misery in his eye, at times, which affected me afterwards at intervals, when I recalled it in the radiant happiness of nineteen, and amidst the so.lemn tranquillities of Oxford. That of itself was interesting; the man was worse by far than he had been meant to be; he had not the mind that reconciles itself to evil. Besides, he respected scholarship, which appeared by the deference he generally showed to myself, then about seventeen; he had an interest in literature,—*that* argues something good; and was pleased at any time, or even cheerful, when I turned the conversation upon books; nay, he seemed touched with emotion when I quoted some sentiment noble and impassioned from one of the great poets, and would ask me to repeat it. He would have been a man of memorable energy, and for good purposes, had it not been for his agony of conflict with pecuniary embarrassments. These probably had commenced in some fatal compliance with temptation arising out of funds confided to him by a client. Perhaps he had gained fifty guineas for a moment of necessity, and had sacrificed for that trifle *only* the serenity and the comfort of a life. Feelings of relenting kindness it was not in my nature to refuse in such a case; and I wished to \* \* \* \* \*

But I never succeeded in tracing his steps through the wilderness of London until some years back, when [

ascertained that he was dead. Generally speaking, the few people whom I have disliked in this world were flourishing people, of good repute. Whereas the knaves whom I have known, one and all, and by no means few, I think of with pleasure and kindness.

Heavens! when I look back to the sufferings which I have witnessed or heard of, even from this one brief London experience, I say, if life could throw open its long suites of chambers to our eyes from some station *beforehand*,—if, from some secret stand, we could look *by anticipation* along its vast corridors, and aside into the recesses opening upon them from either hand,—halls of tragedy or chambers of retribution, simply in that small wing and no more of the great caravanserai which we ourselves shall haunt,—simply in that narrow tract of time, and no more, where we ourselves shall range, and confining our gaze to those, and no others, for whom personally we shall be interested,—what a recoil we should suffer of horror in our estimate of life! What if those sudden catastrophes, or those inexpiable afflictions, which *have* already descended upon the people within my own knowledge, and almost below my own eyes, all of them now gone past, and some long past, had been thrown open before me as a secret exhibition when first I and they stood within the vestibule of morning hopes,—when the calamities themselves had hardly begun to gather in their elements of possibility and when some of the parties to them were as yet no more than infants! The past viewed not *as* the past, but by a spectator who steps back ten years deeper into the rear, in order that he may regard it as a future the calamity of 1840 contemplated from the station o

1830, — the doom that rang the knell of happiness viewed from a point of time when as yet it was neither feared nor would even have been intelligible, — the name that killed in 1843, which in 1835 would have struck no vibration upon the heart, — the portrait that on the day of her Majesty's coronation would have been admired by you with a pure disinterested admiration, but which, if seen to-day, would draw forth an involuntary groan, — cases such as these are strangely moving for all who add deep thoughtfulness to deep sensibility. As the hastiest of improvisations, accept, fair reader (for you it is that will chiefly feel such an invocation of the past), three or four illustrations from my own experience.

Who is this distinguished-looking young woman, with her eyes drooping, and the shadow of a dreadful shock yet fresh upon every feature? Who is the elderly lady, with her eyes flashing fire? Who is the downcast child of sixteen? What is that torn paper lying at their feet? Who is the writer? Whom does the paper concern? Ah! if she, if the central figure in the group—twenty-two at the moment when she is revealed to us—could, on her happy birth-day at sweet seventeen, have seen the image of herself five years onwards, just as *we* see it now, would she have prayed for life as for an absolute blessing? or would she not have prayed to be taken from the evil to come — to be taken away one evening, at least, before this day's sun arose? It is true, she still wears a look of gentle pride, and a relic of that noble smile which belongs to *her* that suffers an injury which many times over she would have died sooner than inflict. Womanly pride refuses

itself before witnesses to the total prostration of the blow; but, for all *that*, you may see that she longs to be left alone, and that her tears will flow without restraint when she is so. This room is her pretty boudoir, in which, till to-night — poor thing! — she has been glad and happy. There stands her miniature conservatory, and there expands her miniature library; as we circumnavigators of literature are apt (you know) to regard all female libraries in the light of miniatures. None of these will ever rekindle a smile on *her* face; and there, beyond, is her music, which only of all that she possesses will now become dearer to her than ever; but not, as once, to feed a self-mocked pensiveness, or to cheat a half visionary sadness. She will be sad, indeed. But she is one of those that will suffer in silence. Nobody will ever detect *her* failing in any point of duty, or querulously seeking the support in others which she can find for herself in this solitary room. Droop she will not in the sight of men; and, for all beyond, nobody has any concern with *that*, except God. You shall hear what becomes of her, before we take our departure; but now let me tell you what has happened. In the main outline I am sure you guess already, without aid of mine, for we leaden-eyed men, in such cases, see nothing by comparison with you our quick-witted sisters. That haughty-looking lady, with the Roman cast of features, who must once have been strikingly handsome, — an Agrippina, even yet, in a favorable presentation, — is the younger lady's aunt. She, it is rumored, once sustained, in her younger days, some injury of that same cruel nature which has this day assailed her niece, and ever

since she has worn an air of disdain, not altogether unsupported by real dignity towards men. This aunt it was that tore the letter which lies upon the floor. It deserved to be torn; and yet she that had the best right to do so would *not* have torn it. That letter was an elaborate attempt on the part of an accomplished young-man to release himself from sacred engagements. What need was there to argue the case of *such* engagements? Could it have been requisite with pure female dignity to plead anything, or do more than *look* an indisposition to fulfil them? The aunt is now moving towards the door, which I am glad to see; and she is followed by that pale, timid girl of sixteen, a cousin, who feels the case profoundly, but is too young and shy to offer an intellectual sympathy.

One only person in this world there is who *could* to-night have been a supporting friend to our young sufferer, and *that* is her dear, loving twin-sister, that for eighteen years read and wrote, thought and sang, slept and breathed, with the dividing-door open forever between their bed-rooms, and never once a separation between their hearts; but she is in a far-distant land. Who else is there at her call? Except God, nobody. Her aunt had somewhat sternly admonished her, though still with a relenting in her eye as she glanced aside at the expression in her niece's face, that she must "call pride to her assistance." Ay, true; but pride, though a strong ally in public is apt in private to turn as treacherous as the worst of those against whom she is invoked. How could it be dreamed, by a person of sense that a brilliant young man, of merits various and eminent, in spite of his baseness, to whom, for nearly

two years, this young woman had given her whole confiding love, might be dismissed from a heart like hers on the earliest summons of pride, simply because she herself had been dismissed from *his*, or seemed to have been dismissed, on a summons of mercenary calculation? Look! now that she is relieved from the weight of an unconfidential presence, she has sat for two hours with her head buried in her hands. At last she rises to look for something. A thought has struck her; and, taking a little golden key which hangs by a chain within her bosom, she searches for something locked up amongst her few jewels. What is it? It is a Bible exquisitely illuminated, with a letter attached by some pretty silken artifice to the blank leaves at the end. This letter is a beautiful record, wisely and pathetically composed, of maternal anxiety still burning strong in death, and yearning, when all objects beside were fast fading from *her* eyes, after one parting act of communion with the twin darlings of her heart. Both were thirteen years old, within a week or two, as on the night before her death they sat weeping by the bedside of their mother, and hanging on her lips, now for farewell whispers and now for farewell kisses. They both knew that, as her strength had permitted during the latter month of her life, she had thrown the last anguish of love in her beseeching heart into a letter of counsel to themselves. Through this, of which each sister had a copy, she trusted long to converse with her orphans. And the last promise which she had entreated on this evening from both was, that in either of two contingencies they would review her counsels, and the passages to which she pointed their attention in the Scriptures; namely

first, in the event of any calamity, that, for one sister or for both, should overspread their paths with total darkness; and, secondly, in the event of life flowing in too profound a stream of prosperity, so as to threaten them with an alienation of interest from all spiritual objects. She had not concealed that, of these two extreme cases, she would prefer for her own children the first. And now had that case arrived, indeed, which she in spirit had desired to meet. Nine years ago, just as the silvery voice of a dial in the dying lady's bed-room was striking nine, upon a summer evening, had the last visual ray streamed from her seeking eyes upon her orphan twins, after which, throughout the night, she had slept away into heaven. Now again had come a summer evening memorable for unhappiness; now again the daughter thought of those dying lights of love which streamed at sunset from the closing eyes of her mother; again, and just as she went back in thought to this image, the same silvery voice of the dial sounded nine o'clock. Again she remembered her mother's dying request; again her own tear-hallowed promise, — and with her heart in her mother's grave she now rose to fulfil it. Here, then, when this solemn recurrence to a testamentary counsel has ceased to be a mere office of duty towards the departed, having taken the shape of a consolation for herself, let us pause.

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Now, fair companion in this exploring voyage of quest into hidden scenes, or forgotten scenes of human life, perhaps it might be instructive to direct our glasses upon the false, perfidious lover. It might. But do not let us do so. We might like him better, or pity



him more, than either of us would desire. His name and memory have long since dropped out of everybody's thoughts. Of prosperity, and (what is more important) of internal peace, he is reputed to have had no gleam from the moment when he betrayed his faith, and in one day threw away the jewel of good conscience, and "a pearl richer than all his tribe." But, however that may be, it is certain that, finally, he became a wreck; and of any *hopeless* wreck it is painful to talk, — much more so, when through him others also became wrecks.

Shall we, then, after an interval of nearly two years has passed over the young lady in the boudoir, look in again upon *her*? You hesitate, fair friend; and I myself hesitate. For in fact she also has become a wreck; and it would grieve us both to see her altered. At the end of twenty-one months she retains hardly a vestige of resemblance to the fine young woman we saw on that unhappy evening, with her aunt and cousin. On consideration, therefore, let us do this.—We will direct our glasses to her room at a point of time about six weeks further on. Suppose this time gone; suppose her now dressed for her grave, and placed in her coffin. The advantage of that is, that though no change can restore the ravages of the past, yet (as often is found to happen with young persons) the expression has revived from her girlish years. The child-like aspect has revolved, and settled back upon her features. The wasting away of the flesh is less apparent in the face; and one might imagine that in this sweet marble countenance was seen the very same upon which, eleven years ago, her mother's darkening eyes had lingered to the last, urti



Clouds had swallowed up the vision of her beloved *twins*. Yet, if that were in part a fancy, this, at least, is no fancy,—that not only much of a child-like truth and simplicity has reinstated itself in the temple of her now reposing features, but also that tranquillity and perfect peace, such as are appropriate to eternity, but which from the *living* countenance had taken their flight forever, on that memorable evening when we looked in upon the impassioned group,—upon the towering and denouncing aunt, the sympathizing but silent cousin, the poor, blighted niece, and the wicked letter lying in fragments at their feet.

Cloud, that hast revealed to us this young creature and her blighted hopes, close up again. And now, a few years later,—not more than four or five,—give back to us the latest arrears of the changes which thou concealest within thy draperies. Once more, “open sesame!” and show us a third generation. Behold a lawn islanded with thickets. How perfect is the verdure; how rich the blossoming shrubberies that screen with verdurous walls from the possibility of intrusion, whilst by their own wandering line of distribution they shape, and umbrageously embay, what one might call lawny saloons and vestibules, sylvan galleries and closets! Some of these recesses, which unlink themselves as fluently as snakes, and unexpectedly as the shyest nooks, watery cells, and crypts, amongst the shores of a forest-lake, being formed by the mere caprices and ramblings of the luxuriant shrubs, are so small and so quiet that one might fancy them meant for *boudoirs*. Here is one that in a less fickle climate would make the loveliest of studies for a writer of

breathings from some solitary heart, or of *suspiria* from some impassioned memory! And, opening from one angle of this embowered study, issues a little narrow corridor, that, after almost wheeling back upon itself, in its playful mazes, finally widens into a little circular chamber; out of which there is no exit (except back again by the entrance), small or great; so that, adjacent to his study, the writer would command how sweet a bed-room, permitting him to lie the summer through, gazing all night long at the burning host of heaven. How silent *that* would be at the noon of summer nights — how grave-like in its quiet! And yet, need there be asked a stillness or a silence more profound than is felt at this present noon of day? One reason for such peculiar repose, over and above the tranquil character of the day, and the distance of the place from the high-roads, is the outer zone of woods, which almost on every quarter invests the shrubberies, swathing them (as one may express it), belting them and overlooking them, from a varying distance of two and three furlongs, so as oftentimes to keep the winds at a distance. But, however caused and supported, the silence of these fanciful lawns and lawny chambers is oftentimes oppressive in the depths of summer to people unfamiliar with solitudes, either mountainous or sylvan; and many would be apt to suppose that the villa, to which these pretty shrubberies form the chief dependencies, must be untenanted. But that is not the case. The house is inhabited, and by its own legal mistress, the proprietress of the whole domain; and not at all a silent mistress, but as noisy as most little ladies of five years old, for that is her age. Now, and just as we are speaking, you may hear her

little joyous clamor, as she issues from the house. This way she comes, bounding like a fawn; and soon she rushes into the little recess which I pointed out as a proper study for any man who should be weaving the deep harmonies of memorial *suspiria*. But I fancy that she will soon dispossess it of that character, for her *suspiria* are not many at this stage of her life. Now she comes dancing into sight; and you see that, if she keeps the promise of her infancy, she will be an interesting creature to the eye in after life. In other respects, also, she is an engaging child, — loving, natural, and wild as any one of her neighbors for some miles round namely, leverets, squirrels, and ring-doves. But what will surprise you most is, that, although a child of pure English blood, she speaks very little English; but more Bengalee than perhaps you will find it convenient to construe. That is her ayah, who comes up from behind, at a pace so different from her youthful mistress's. But, if their paces are different, in other things they agree most cordially; and dearly they love each other. In reality, the child has passed her whole life in the arms of this ayah. She remembers nothing elder than *her*; eldest of things is the ayah in her eyes; and, if the ayah should insist on her worshipping herself as the goddess Railroadina or Steamboatina, that made England, and the sea, and Bengal, it is certain that the little thing would do so, asking no question but this, — whether kissing would do for worshipping.

Every evening at nine o'clock, as the ayah sits by the little creature lying awake in bed, the silvery tongue of a dial tolls the hour. Reader, you know who she is. She is the grand-daughter of her that faded away about

sunset in gazing at her twin orphans. Her name is Grace. And she is the niece of that elder and once happy Grace, who spent so much of her happiness in this very room, but whom, in her utter desolation, we saw in the boudoir, with the torn letter at her feet. She is the daughter of that other sister, wife to a military officer who died abroad. Little Grace never saw her grandmamma, nor her lovely aunt, that was her namesake, nor consciously her mamma. She was born six months after the death of the elder Grace; and her mother saw her only through the mists of mortal suffering, which carried her off three weeks after the birth of her daughter.

This view was taken several years ago; and since then the younger Grace, in her turn, is under a cloud of affliction. But she is still under eighteen; and of her there may be hopes. Seeing such things in so short a space of years, for the grandmother died at thirty-two, we say, — Death we can face: but knowing, as some of us do, what is human life, which of us is it that without shuddering could (if consciously we were summoned) face the hour of birth?

## ADDITIONS

TO THE "CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM-EATER."

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### DE QUINCEY.

THIS family, which split (or, as a grammatical purist lately said to me, in a tone of expostulation, *splal*) into three national divisions, — English, French, and American, — originally was Norwegian; and in the year of our Christian era *one thousand* spoke (I believe) the most undeniable Norse. Throughout the eleventh century, the heads of this family (in common with all the ruffians and martial vagabonds of Europe, that had Venetian sequins enough disposable for such a trip) held themselves in readiness to join any *likely* leader; and did join William the Norman. Very few, indeed, or probably none, of his brigands were Frenchmen, or native Neustrians; Normans being notoriously a name not derived *from* any French province, but imported *into* that province by trans-Baltic, and in a smaller proportion by cis-Baltic aliens. This Norwegian family, having assumed a territorial denomination from the district or village of Quincy, in the province now called Normandy, transplanted themselves to England; where.

and subsequently by marriage in Scotland, they ascended to the highest rank in both kingdoms, and held the highest offices open to a subject. A late distinguished writer, Mr. Moir, of Musselburgh, the *Delta* of "Blackwood's Magazine," took the trouble (which must have been considerable) of tracing their aspiring movements in Scotland, through a period when Normans transferred themselves from England to Scotland in considerable numbers, and with great advantages. This elaborate paper, published many years ago in "Blackwood's Magazine," first made known the leading facts of their career in Scotland. Meantime in England they continued to flourish through nine or ten generations; took a distinguished part in one, at least, of the Crusades; and a still more perilous share in the Barons' Wars, under Henry III. No family drank more deeply or more frequently from the cup of treason, which in those days was not always a very grave offence in people who having much territorial influence had also much money. But, happening to drink once too often, or taking too long a "pull" at the cup, the Earls of Winchester suddenly came to grief. Amongst the romances of astronomy, there is one, I believe, which has endeavored to account for the little asteroids of our system, by supposing them fragments of some great planet that had, under internal convulsion or external collision, at some period suddenly exploded. In our own planet Tellus, such a county as York, under a similar catastrophe, would make a very pretty little asteroid. And, with some miniature resemblance to such a case, some

times benefiting by the indulgence of the crown, sometimes by legal devices, sometimes by aid of matrimonial alliances, numerous descendants, confessedly innocent, from the guilty earl, projected themselves by successive efforts, patiently watching their opportunities, from the smoking ruins of the great feudal house: stealthily through two generations creeping out of their lurking holes; timidly, when the great shadows from the threatening throne had passed over, re-assuming the family name. Concurrently with these *personal* fragments projected from the ancient house, flew off random splinters and fragments from the great planetary disk of the Winchester estates, little asteroids that formed ample inheritances for the wants of this or that provincial squire, of this or that tame villatic squireen.\*

The kingly old oak, that had been the leader of the forest, was thus suddenly (in the technical language of wood-craft) cut down into a "pollard." This mutilation forever prevented it from aspiring cloudwards by means of some mighty stem, such as grows upon Norwegian hills, fit to be the mast of "some great admiral." Nevertheless, we see daily amongst the realities of nature, that a tree, after passing through such a process of degradation, yet manifests the great arrears of vindictive life lurking within it, by throwing out a huge radiation of slender boughs and

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\* This last variety of the rustic *regulus* is of Hibernian origin, and, as regards the name, was unknown to us in England until Miss Edgeworth had extended the horizon of our social experience. Yet, without the name, I presume that the *thing* must have been known occasionally even in England.



miniature shoots, small but many, so that we are forced exactly to invert the fine words of Lucan, saying no longer, *trunco, non frondibus efficit umbram*, but, on the contrary, *non trunco sed frondibus efficit umbram*. This great cabbage-head of this ancient human tree threw a broad massy umbrage over more villages than one; sometimes yielding representatives moody and mutinous, sometimes vivacious and inventive, sometimes dull and lethargic, until at last, one fine morning, on rubbing their eyes, they found themselves actually in the sixteenth century abreast of Henry VIII. and his fiery children. Ah, what a century was that! Sculptured as only Froude can sculpture those that fight across the chasms of eternity; grouped as only Froude can group the mighty factions, acting or suffering, arraigning before chanceries of man, or protesting before chanceries of God — what vast arrays of marble gladiators fighting for truth, real or imagined, through the arenas in each generation of that and the succeeding century! And how ennobling a distinction of modern humanity, that in Pagan antiquity no truth as yet existed, none had been revealed, none emblazoned, on behalf of which man *could* have fought! As Lord Bacon remarks, — though strangely, indeed, publishing in the very terms of this remark his own blindness to the causes and consequences, — religious wars were unknown to antiquity. Personal interests, and those only, did or could furnish a subject of conflict. But throughout the sixteenth century, whether in England, in France, or in Germany, it was a spiritual interest, shadowy and aerial, which embattled armies



against armies. Simply the nobility of this interest it was, simply the grandeur of a cause moving by springs transcendent to all vulgar and mercenary collisions of prince with prince, or family with family, that arrayed man against man, not upon petty combinations of personal intrigue, but upon questions of everlasting concern — this majestic principle of the strife it was that constituted for the noblest minds its secret magnetism. Early in the seventeenth century, when it seemed likely that the interests of a particular family would be entangled with the principles at issue, multitudes became anxious to evade the strife by retiring to the asylum of forests. Amongst these was one branch of the De Quinceys. Enamored of democracy, this family, laying aside the aristocratic *De* attached to their name, settled in New England, where they subsequently rose, through long public services, to the highest moral rank — as measured by all possible expressions of public esteem that are consistent with the simplicities of the great republic. Mr. Josiah Quincy, as head of this distinguished family, is appealed to as one who takes rank by age and large political experience with the founders of the American Union. Another branch of the same family had, at a much earlier period, settled in France. Finally, the squires and squireens — that is, those who benefited in any degree by those “asteroids” which I have explained as exploded from the ruins of the Winchester estates — naturally remained in England. The last of them who enjoyed any relics whatever of that ancient territorial domain, was an elder kinsman of my father. I never had the honor

of seeing him ; in fact, it was impossible that I *should* have such an honor, since he died during the American war, which war had closed, although it had not paid its bills, some time before my birth. He enacted the part of squireen, I have been told, creditably enough in a village belonging either to the county of Leicester, Nottingham, or Rutland. Sir Andrew Aguecheek observes, as one of his sentimental remembrances, that he also at one period of his life had been "adored." "I was adored once," says the knight, seeming to acknowledge that he was not adored then. But the squireen was "adored" in a limited way to the last. This fading representative of a crusading house declined gradually into the oracle of the bar at the Red Lion ; and was adored by two persons at the least (not counting himself), namely, the landlord, and occasionally the waiter. Mortgages had eaten up the last vestiges of the old territorial wrecks ; and, with his death, a new era commenced for this historical family, which now (as if expressly to irritate its ambition) finds itself distributed amongst three mighty nations, — France, America, and England, — and precisely those three that are usually regarded as the leaders of civilization.\*

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\* The omission of the *De*, as an addition looking better at a tournament than as an endorsement on a bill of exchange, began, as to many hundreds of English names, full three hundred years ago. Many English families have disused this affix simply from indolence. As to the terminal variations, *cy*, *cie*, *cey*, those belong, as natural and inevitable exponents of a transitional condition, to the unsettled spelling that characterizes the early stages of literature in all countries alike

MY GUARDIANS.<sup>42</sup>

My father died when I was in my seventh year, leaving six children, including myself (viz., four sons and two daughters), to the care of four guardians and of our mother, who was invested with the legal authority of a guardian. This word "*guardian*" kindles a fiery thrill in my nerves; so much was that special power of guardianship, as wielded by one of the four, concerned in the sole capital error of my boyhood. To this error my own folly would hardly have been equal, unless by concurrence with the obstinacy of others. From the bitter remembrance of this error in myself — of this obstinacy in my hostile guardian, suffer me to draw the privilege of making a moment's pause upon this subject of legal guardianship.

There is not (I believe) in human society, under whatever form of civilization, any trust or delegated duty which has more often been negligently or even perfidiously administered. In the days of classical Greece and Rome, my own private impression, founded on the collation of many incidental notices, is — that this, beyond all other forms of domestic authority, furnished to wholesale rapine and speculation their very amplest arena. The relation of father and son, as was that of *patron* and *client*, were generally, in the practice of life, cherished with religious fidelity: whereas the solemn duties of the *tutor* (*i. e.* the *guardian*) to his ward, which had their very root and origin in the tenderest adjurations of a dying friend, though subsequently refreshed by the hourly spectacle of helpless orphanage playing round the margins of pitfalls hidden by flowers, spoke but seldom to the

sensibilities of a Roman through any language of oracular power. Few indeed, if any, were the obligations in a proper sense *moral* which pressed upon the Roman. The main fountains of moral obligation had in Rome, by law or by custom, been thoroughly poisoned. Marriage had corrupted itself through the facility of divorce, and through the consequences of that facility (viz. levity in choosing, and fickleness in adhering to the choice), into so exquisite a traffic of selfishness, that it could not yield so much as a phantom model of sanctity. The relation of husband and wife had, for all moral impressions, perished amongst the Romans. The relation of father and child had all its capacities of holy tenderness crushed out of it under the fierce pressure of penal and vindictive enforcements. The duties of the client to his patron stood upon no basis of simple gratitude or simple fidelity (corresponding to the feudal *fealty*), but upon a basis of prudential terror; terror from positive law, or from social opinion. From the first intermeddling of law with the movement of the higher moral affections, there is an end to freedom in the act, to purity in the motive, to dignity in the personal relation. Accordingly, in the France of the pre-revolutionary period, and in the China of all periods, it has been with baleful effects to the national morals that positive law has come in aid of the paternal rights. And in the Rome of ancient history it may be said that this one original and rudimental wrong done to the holy freedom of human affections, had the effect of extinguishing thenceforward all *conscientious* movement in whatever direction. And thus, amongst a people naturally more highly principled than the Greeks, if you except ebullitions of public spirit and patriotism (too often of

mere ignoble nationality), no class of actions stood upon any higher basis of motive than (1.) legal ordinance; (2.) superstitious fear; or (3.) servile compliance with the insolent exactions of popular usage. Strange, therefore, it would have been if the *tutor* of obscure orphans, with *extra* temptations, and *extra* facilities for indulging them, should have shown himself more faithful to his trust than the governor of provinces — prætorian or proconsular. Yet who more treacherous and rapacious than he? Rarest of men was the upright governor that accepted no bribes from the criminal, and extorted no ransoms from the timid. He nevertheless, as a *public* trustee, was watched by the jealousy of political competitors, and had by possibility a solemn audit to face in the senate or in the forum; perhaps in both. But the tutor, who administered a private trust on behalf of orphans, might count on the certainty that no public attention could ever be attracted to concerns so obscure, and politically so uninteresting. Reasonably, therefore, and by all analogy, a Roman must have regarded the ordinary domestic *tutor* as almost inevitably a secret delinquent using the opportunities and privileges of his office as mere instruments for working spoliation and ruin upon the inheritance confided to his care. This deadly and besetting evil of Pagan days must have deepened a hundredfold the glooms overhanging the death-beds of parents. Too often the dying father could not fail to read in his own life-long experience, that, whilst seeking special protection for his children, he might himself be introducing amongst them a separate and imminent danger. Leaving behind him a little household of infants, a little fleet (as it might be represented)

of fairy pinnaces, just raising their anchors in preparation for crossing the mighty deeps of life, he made signals for "convoy." Some one or two (at best imperfectly known to him), amongst those who traversed the same seas, he accepted in that character; but doubtfully, sorrowfully, fearfully; and at the very moment when the faces of his children were disappearing amongst the vapors of death, the miserable thought would cross his prophetic soul — that too probably this pretended "convoy," under the strong temptations of the case, might eventually become pirates; robbers, at the least; and by possibility wilful misleaders to the inexperience of his children.

From this dreadful aggravation of the anguish at any rate besetting the death-beds of parents summoned away from a group of infant children, there has been a mighty deliverance wrought in a course of centuries by the vast diffusion of Christianity. In these days, wheresoever an atmosphere is breathed that has been purified by Christian charities and Christian principles — this household pestilence has been continually dwindling: and in the England of this generation there is no class of peculation which we so seldom hear of: one proof of which is found in the indifference with which most of us regard the absolute security offered to children by the Court of Chancery. My father, therefore, as regarded the quiet of his dying hours, benefited by the felicity of his times and his country. He made the best selection for the future guardianship of his six children that his opportunities allowed; from his circle of intimate friends, he selected the four who stood highest in his estimation for honor and practical wisdom: which done,

and relying for the redressing of any harsh tendencies in male guardians upon the discretional power lodged in my mother, thenceforth he rested from his anxieties. Not one of these guardians but justified his choice so far as honor and integrity were concerned. Yet, after all, there is a limit (and sooner reached perhaps in England than in other divisions of Christendom) to the good that can be achieved in such cases by prospective wisdom. For we, in England, more absolutely than can be asserted of any other nation, are not *fainéans*: rich and poor, all of us have something to do. To Italy it is that we must look for a peasantry idle through two thirds of their time. To Spain it is that we must look for an aristocracy *physically*\* degraded under the ignoble training of women and priests; and for princes (such as Ferdinand VII.) that make it the glory of their lives to have embroidered a petticoat. Amongst ourselves of this current generation, whilst those functions of guardianship may be surely counted on which presume conscientious loyalty to the interests of their wards; on the other hand, all which presume continued vigilance and provision from afar are, in simple truth, hardly compatible with our English state of society. The guardians chosen by my father, had they been the wisest and also the most energetic of men, could not in many

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\* It is asserted by travellers — English, French, and German alike — that the ducal order in Spain (as that order of the Spanish peerage most carefully withdrawn from what Kentucky would call the *rough-and-tumble* discipline of a popular education) exhibit in their very persons and bodily development undisguised evidences of effeminate habits operating through many generations. It would be satisfactory to know the unexaggerated truth on this point; the truth unbiassed alike by national and by democratic prejudices.



conceivable emergencies have fulfilled his secret wishes. Of the four men, one was a merchant (not in the narrow sense of Scotland, derived originally from France, where no class of merchant princes has ever existed, but in the large, noble sense of England, of Florence, of Venice): consequently his extensive relations with sea-ports and distant colonies continually drawing off his attention, and even his personal presence, from domestic affairs, made it hopeless that he should even attempt more on behalf of his wards than slightly to watch the administration of their pecuniary interests. A second of our guardians was a rural magistrate, but in a populous district close upon Manchester, which even at that time was belted with a growing body of turbulent aliens — Welsh and Irish. He therefore, overwhelmed by the distractions of his official station, rightly perhaps conceived himself to have fulfilled his engagements as a guardian, if he stood ready to come forward upon any difficulty arising, but else in ordinary cases devolved his functions upon those who enjoyed more leisure. In that category stood, beyond a doubt, a third of our guardians, the Rev. Samuel H., who was at the time of my father's death a curate at some church (I believe) in Manchester or in Salford.\* This gentleman represented a class —

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\* Salford is a large town legally distinguished from Manchester for parliamentary purposes, and divided from it physically by a river, but else virtually, as regards intercourse and reciprocal influence, is a quarter of Manchester; in fact holding the same relation to Manchester that Southwark does to London; or, if the reader insists upon having a classical illustration of the case, the same relation that in ancient days Argos did to Mycenæ. An invitation to dinner, given by the public herald of Argos, could be heard to the centre of Mycenæ; and by a gourmand, if the dinner promised to be specially good, in the remotest suburb.



large enough at all times by necessity of human nature, but in those days far larger than at present — that class, I mean, who sympathize with no spiritual sense or spiritual capacities in man ; who understand by religion simply a respectable code of ethics, leaning for support upon some great mysteries dimly traced in the background, and commemorated in certain great church festivals by the *elder* churches of Christendom ; as, *e. g.*, by the English, which does not stand as to age on the Reformation epoch, by the Romish, and by the Greek. He had composed a body of about 330 sermons, which thus, at the rate of two every Sunday, revolved through a cycle of three years ; that period being modestly assumed as sufficient for insuring to their eloquence total oblivion. Possibly to a cynic some shorter cycle might have seemed equal to that effect, since their topics rose but rarely above the level of prudential ethics ; and the style, though scholarly, was not impressive. As a preacher, Mr. H. was sincere, but not earnest. He was a good and conscientious man ; and he made a high valuation of the pulpit as an organ of civilization for coöperating with books ; but it was impossible for any man, starting from the low ground of themes so unimpassioned and so desultory as the benefits of industry, the danger from bad companions, the importance of setting a good example, or the value of perseverance — to pump up any persistent stream of earnestness either in himself or in his auditors. These auditors, again, were not of a class to desire much earnestness. There were no naughty people among them : most of them were rich, and came to church in carriages ; and, as a natural result of their esteem for my reverend guardian, a num

ber of them combined to build a church for him -- viz., St. Peter's — at the point of confluence between Mosely Street and the newly projected Oxford Street; then existing only as a sketch in the portfolio of a surveyor. But what connected myself individually with Mr. H. was, that two or three years previously I, together with one of my brothers (five years my senior), had been placed under his care for classical instruction. This was done, I believe, in obedience to a dying injunction of my father, who had a just esteem for Mr. S. H., as an upright man, but apparently too exalted an opinion of his scholarship: for he was but an indifferent Grecian. In whatever way the appointment arose, so it was that this gentleman, previously *tutor* in the Roman sense to all of us, now became to my brother and myself tutor also in the common English sense. From the age of eight up to eleven and a half, the character and intellectual attainments of Mr. H., were therefore influentially important to myself in the development of my powers, such as they were. Even his 330 sermons, which rolled overhead with such slender effect upon his general congregation, to me became a real instrument of improvement. One half of these, indeed, were all that I heard; for, as my father's house (Greenhay) stood at this time in the country, Manchester not having yet overtaken it, the distance obliged us to go in a carriage, and only to the morning service; but every sermon in this morning course was propounded to me as a textual basis upon which I was to raise a mimic duplicate — sometimes a pure miniature abstract — sometimes a rhetorical expansion — but preserving as much as possible of the

original language ; and also (which puzzled me painfully) preserving the exact succession of the thoughts ; which might be easy where they stood in some dependency upon each other, as, for instance, in the development of an argument, but in arbitrary or chance arrangements was often as trying to my powers as any feat of rope-dancing. I, therefore, amongst that whole congregation,\* was the one sole careworn auditor — agitated about that which, over all other heads, flowed away like water over marble slabs — viz., the somewhat torpid sermon of my somewhat torpid guardian. But

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\* "*That whole congregation:*" — Originally at churches which I do not remember, where, however, in consideration of my tender age, the demands levied upon my memory were much lighter. Two or three years later, when I must have been nearing my tenth year, and when St. Peter's had been finished, occurred the opening, and consequently (as an indispensable pre-condition) the consecration of that edifice by the bishop of the diocese (viz., Chester). I, as a ward of the incumbent, was naturally amongst those specially invited to the festival: and I remember a little incident, which exposed broadly the the conflict of feelings inherited by the Church of England from the Puritans of the seventeenth century. The architecture of the church was Grecian; and certainly the enrichments, inside or outside, were few enough, neither florid nor obtrusive. But in the centre of the ceiling, for the sake of breaking the monotony of so large a blank white surface, there was moulded, in plaster-of-Paris, a large tablet or shield, charged with a cornucopia of fruits and flowers. And yet, when we were all assembled in the vestry waiting — rector, churchwardens, architect, and trains of dependents — there arose a deep buzz of anxiety, which soon ripened into an articulate expression of fear, that the bishop would think himself bound, like the horrid eikonoclasts of 1645, to issue his decree of utter *averruncation* to the simple decoration overhead. Fearfully did we all tread the little aisles in the procession of the prelate. Earnestly my lord looked upwards; but finally — were it courtesy, or doubtfulness as to his ground, or approbation — he passed on.

this annoyance was not wholly lost : and those same 330 sermons, which (lasting only through sixteen minutes each) were approved and forgotten by everybody else, for me became a perfect palaestra of intellectual gymnastics far better suited to my childish weakness than could have been the sermons of Isaac Barrow or Jeremy Taylor. In these last, the gorgeous imagery would have dazzled my feeble vision, and in both the gigantic thinking would have crushed my efforts at apprehension. I drew, in fact, the deepest benefits from this weekly exercise. Perhaps, also, in the end it ripened into a great advantage for me, though long and bitterly I complained of it, that I was not allowed to use a pencil in taking notes ; all was to be charged upon the memory. But it is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it, and becomes trustworthy as you trust it. So that, in my third year of practice, I found my abstracting and condensing powers sensibly enlarged. My guardian was gradually better satisfied : for unfortunately (and in the beginning it *was* unfortunate) always one witness could be summoned against me upon any impeachment of my fidelity — viz., the sermon itself ; since, though lurking amongst the 330, the wretch was easily forked out. But these appeals grew fewer ; and my guardian, as I have said, was continually better satisfied. Meantime, might not I be continually less satisfied with *him* and his 330 sermons ? Not at all : loving and trusting, without doubt or reserve, and with the deepest principles of veneration rooted in my nature, I never, upon meeting something more impressive than the average complexion of my guardian's discourses, for one moment thought of him as

worse or feebler than others, but simply as different; and no more quarrelled with him for his characteristic langor, than with a green riband for not being blue. By mere accident, I one day heard quoted a couplet which seemed to me sublime. It described a preacher such as sometimes arises in difficult times, or in fermenting times, a son of thunder, that looks all enemies in the face, and volunteers a defiance even when it would have been easy to evade it. The lines were written by Richard Baxter — who battled often with self-created storms from the first dawn of the Parliamentary War in 1642, through the period of Cromwell (to whom he was personally odious), and, finally, through the trying range of the second Charles and of the second James. As a pulpit orator, he was perhaps the Whitfield of the seventeenth century — the *Leuconomos* of Cowper. And thus it is that he describes the impassioned character of his own preaching —

“I preach’d, as never sure to preach again ;”

[Even *that* was telling ; but then followed this thunder-peal]

“And as a dying man to dying men.”

This couplet, which seemed to me equally for weight and for splendor like molten gold, laid bare another aspect of the Catholic Church ; revealed it as a Church militant and crusading.

Not even thus, however, did I descry any positive imperfection in my guardian. He and Baxter had fallen upon different generations. Baxter’s century, from first to last was revolutionary. Along the entire course of that seventeenth century, the great principles of repre-

sentative government and the rights of conscience \* were passing through the anguish of conflict and fiery trial. Now again in my own day, at the close of the eighteenth century, it is true that all the elements of social life were thrown into the crucible — but on behalf of our neighbors, no longer of ourselves. No longer, therefore, was invoked the heroic pleader, ready for martyrdom, preaching, therefore, “as never sure to preach again;” and I no more made it a defect in my guardian that he wanted energies for combating evils now forgotten, than that he had not in patriotic fervor leaped into a gulf, like the fabulous Roman martyr, Curtius, or in zeal for liberty had not mounted a scaffold, like the real English martyr, Algernon Sidney.

Every Sunday, duly as it revolved, brought with it this cruel anxiety. On Saturday night, under sad anticipation, on Sunday night, under sadder experimental knowledge, of my trying task, I slept ill; my pillow was stuffed with thorns; and until Monday morning's inspection and *armilustrium* had dismissed me from parade to “stand at ease,” verily I felt like a false steward summoned to some killing audit. Then suppose Monday to be invaded by some horrible intruder visitor perhaps from a band of my guardian's poor relations, that in some undiscovered nook of Lancashire

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\* “*The rights of conscience:*” — With which it is painful to know that Baxter did not sympathize. Religious toleration he called “Soul-murder.” And if you reminded him that the want of this toleration had been his own capital grievance, he replied, “Ah, but the cases were very different: I was in the right; whereas the vast majority of those who will benefit by this newfangled toleration are shockingly in the wrong.”

seemed in fancy to blacken all the fields, and suddenly at a single note of "*caw caw*," rose in one vast cloud like crows, and settled down for weeks at the table of my guardian and his wife, whose noble hospitality would never allow the humblest among them to be saddened by a faint welcome. In such cases very possibly, the whole week did not see the end of my troubles.

On these terms for upwards of three and a half years — that is, from my eighth to beyond my eleventh birthday — my guardian and I went on cordially: he was never once angry, as indeed he never had any reason for anger; I never once treating my task either as odious (which in the most abominable excess it was), or, on the other hand, as costing but a trivial effort, which practice might have taught me to hurry through with contemptuous ease. To the very last I found no ease at all in this weekly task, which never ceased to be "a thorn in the flesh:" and I believe that my guardian, like many of the grim Pagan divinities, inhaled a flavor of fragrant incense, from the fretting and stinging of anxiety which, as it were some holy vestal fire, he kept alive by this periodic exaction. It gave him pleasure that he could reach me in the very recesses of my dreams, where even a Pariah might look for rest; so that the Sunday, which to man, and even to the brutes within his gates, offered an interval of rest, for me was signalized as a day of martyrdom. Yet in this, after all, it is possible that he did me a service: for my constitutional infirmity of mind ran but too determinately towards the sleep of endless reverie, and of dreamy abstraction from life and its realities.

Whether serviceable or not, however, the connection



between my guardian and myself was now drawing to its close.

A MANCHESTER HOME.<sup>43</sup>

SOME months after my eleventh birthday, Greenhay\* was sold, and my mother's establishment — both children and servants — was translated to Bath: only that for a few months I and one brother were still left under the care of Mr. Samuel H.; so far, that is, as regarded our education. Else, as regarded the luxurious comforts of a thoroughly English home, we became the guests, by special invitation, of a young married couple in Manchester — viz., Mr. and Mrs. K——. This incident, though otherwise without results, I look back upon with feelings inexpressibly profound, as a jewelly parenthesis of pathetic happiness — such as emerges but once in any man's life. Mr. K. was a young and rising American merchant; by which I mean, that he was an Englishman who exported to the United States. He had married about three years previously a pretty and amiable young woman, well educated, and endowed with singular compass of intellect. But the distinguishing feature in this household was the spirit of love which, under the benign superintendence of the mistress, diffused itself through all its members.

The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, amongst many novel ideas, which found no welcome even with his friends, in-

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\* “*Greenhay*.” — A country-house built by my father; and at the time of its foundation (say in 1791 or 1792) separated from the last outskirts of Manchester by an entire mile; but now, and for many a year, overtaken by the hasty strides of this great city, and long since (I presume) absorbed into its mighty uproar.



isted earnestly and often upon this — viz., that a great danger was threatening our social system in Great Britain, from the austere separation existing between our educated and our working classes ; and that a more conciliatory style of intercourse between these two bisections of our social body must be established, or else — a tremendous revolution. This is not the place to discuss so large a question ; and I shall content myself with making two remarks. The first is this — that, although a change of the sort contemplated by Dr. Arnold might, if considered as an operative *cause*, point forward to some advantages, on the other hand, if considered as an *effect*, it points backward to a less noble constitution of society by much than we already enjoy. Those nations whose upper classes speak paternally and caressingly to the working classes, and to servants in particular, do so because they speak from the lofty stations of persons having civil rights to those who have none. Two centuries back, when a military chieftain addressed his soldiers as “ *my children*,” he did so because he was an irresponsible despot exercising uncontrolled powers of life and death. From the moment when legal rights have been won for the poorest classes, inevitable respect on the part of the higher classes extinguishes forever the affectionate style which belongs naturally to the state of pupillage or infantine bondage.

That is my first remark : my second is this — that the change advocated by Dr. Arnold, whether promising or not, is practically impossible ; or possible, I should say through one sole channel — viz., that of domestic servitude. There only do the two classes concerned come hourly into contact. On that stage only they

meet without intrusion upon each other. There only is an opening for change. And a wise mistress, who possesses tact enough to combine a gracious affability with a self-respect that never slumbers nor permits her to descend into gossip, will secure the attachment of all young and impressible women. Such a mistress was Mrs. K——. She had won the gratitude of her servants from the first, by making the amplest provision for their comfort; their confidence, by listening with patience, and counselling with prudence; and their respect, by refusing to intermeddle with gossiping personalities always tending to slander. To this extent, perhaps, most mistresses perhaps might follow her example. But the happiness which reigned in Mrs. K——'s house at this time depended very much upon special causes. All the eight persons had the advantage of youth; and the three young female servants were under the spell of fascination, such as could rarely be counted on, from a spectacle held up hourly before their eyes, that spectacle which of all others is the most touching to womanly sensibilities, and which any one of these servants might hope without presumption, to realize for herself — the spectacle, I mean, of a happy marriage union between two persons, who lived in harmony so absolute with each other, as to be independent of the world outside. How tender and self-sufficing such a union might be, they saw with their own eyes. The season was then mid-winter, which of itself draws closer all household ties. Their own labors, as generally in respectable English services, were finished for the most part by two o'clock; and as the hours of evening drew nearer, when the master's return might be looked for without fail

beautiful was the smile of anticipation upon the gentle features of the mistress: even more beautiful the reflex of that smile, half-unconscious, and half-repressed, upon the features of the sympathizing hand-maidens. One child, a little girl of two years old, had then crowned the happiness of the K——s. She naturally lent her person at all times, and apparently in all places at once, to the improvement of the family groups. My brother and myself, who had been trained from infancy to the courteous treatment of servants, filled up a vacancy in the graduated scale of ascending ages, and felt in varying degrees the depths of a peace which we could not adequately understand or appreciate. Bad tempers there were none amongst us; nor any opening for personal jealousies; nor, though the privilege of our common youth, either angry recollections breathing from the past, or fretting anxieties gathering from the future. The spirit of hope and the spirit of peace (so it seemed to me, when looking back upon this profound calm) had, for their own enjoyment, united in a sisterly league to blow a solitary bubble of visionary happiness — and to sequester from the unresting hurricanes of life one solitary household of eight persons within a four months' lull, as if within some Arabian tent on some untrodden wilderness, withdrawn from human intrusion, or even from knowledge, by worlds of mist and vapor.

How deep was that lull! and yet, as in a human atmosphere, how frail? Did the visionary bubble burst at once? Not so: but silently and by measured steps, like a dissolving palace of snow, it collapsed. In the superb expression of Shakespeare, minted by himself and drawn from his own aerial fancy, like a cloud it

“*dislimned* ;” lost its lineaments by stealthy steps. Already the word “*parting*” (for myself and my brother were under summons for Bath) hoisted the first signal for breaking up. Next, and not very long afterwards, came a mixed signal : alternate words of joy and grief—marriage and death severed the sisterly union amongst the young female servants. Then, thirdly, but many years later, vanished from earth, and from peace the deepest that can support itself on earth, summoned to a far deeper peace, the mistress of the household herself, together with her first-born child. Some years later, perhaps twenty from this time, as I stood sheltering myself from rain in a shop within the most public street of Manchester, the master of the establishment drew my attention to a gentleman on the opposite side of the street—roaming along in a reckless style of movement, and apparently insensible to the notice which he attracted. “That,” said the master of the shop, “was once a leading merchant in our town ; but he met with great commercial embarrassments. There was no impeachment of his integrity, or (as I believe) of his discretion. But what with these commercial calamities, and deaths in his family, he lost all hope ; and you see what sort of consolation it is that he seeks”—meaning to say that his style of walking argued intoxication. I did not think so. There was a settled misery in his eye, but complicated with *that* an expression of nervous distraction, that, if it should increase, would make life an intolerable burden. I never saw him again, and thought with horror of his being called in old age to face the fierce tragedies of life. For many reasons, I recoiled from forcing myself upon his notice : but I had ascer

tained, some time previously to this casual rencounter, that he and myself were at that date, all that remained of the once joyous household. At present, and for many a year, I am myself the sole relic from that household sanctuary — sweet, solemn, profound — that concealed, as in some ark floating on solitary seas, eight persons, since called away, all except myself, one after one, to that rest which only could be deeper than ours was then.

AT THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

WHEN I left the K——s, I left Manchester; and during the next three years I was sent to two very different schools; first, to a public one — viz., the Bath Grammar School, then and since famous for its excellence — secondly, to a private school in Wiltshire. At the end of the three years, I found myself once again in Manchester. I was then fifteen years old, and a trifle more; and as it had come to the knowledge of Mr. G., a banker in Lincolnshire (whom hitherto I have omitted to notice amongst my guardians, as the one too generally prevented from interfering by his remoteness from the spot, but whom otherwise I should have recorded with honor, as by much the ablest amongst them), that some pecuniary advantages were attached to a residence at the Manchester Grammar School, whilst in other respects that school seemed as eligible as any other, he had counselled my mother to send me thither. In fact, a three years' residence at this school obtained an annual allowance for seven years of nearly (if not quite) £50; which sum, added to my own patrimonial income of £150, would have made up the annual £200 ordinarily considered the proper allowance for an Oxford under

graduate. No objection arising from any quarter, this plan was adopted, and soon afterwards carried into effect.

On a day, therefore, it was in the closing autumn (or rather in the opening winter) of 1800 that my first introduction took place to the Manchester Grammar School. The school-room showed already in its ample proportions some hint of its pretensions as an endowed school, or school of that class which I believe peculiar to England. To this limited extent had the architectural sense of power been timidly and parsimoniously invoked. Beyond that, nothing had been attempted; and the dreary expanse of whitewashed walls, that at so small a cost might have been embellished by plaster-of-paris friezes and large medallions, illustrating to the eye of the youthful student the most memorable glorifications of literature — these were bare as the walls of a poor-house or a lazaretto; buildings whose functions, as thoroughly sad and gloomy, the mind recoils from drawing into relief by sculpture or painting. But this building was dedicated to purposes that were noble. The naked walls clamored for decoration: and how easily might tablets have been moulded — exhibiting (as a first homage to literature) Athens, with the wisdom of Athens, in the person of Pisistratus, concentrating the general energies upon the revisal and the re-casting of the “Iliad.” Or (second) the Athenian captives in Sicily, within the fifth century B. C., as winning noble mercy for themselves by some

“Repeated air  
Of sad Electra’s poet.”

Such, and so sudden, had been the oblivion of earthly

passions wrought by the contemporary poet of Athens that in a moment the wrath of Sicily, with all its billows, ran down into a heavenly calm; and he that could plead for his redemption no closer relation to Euripides than the accident of recalling some scatterings from his divine verses, suddenly found his chains dropping to the ground; and himself, that in the morning had risen a despairing slave in a stone-quarry, translated at once as a favored brother into a palace of Syracuse. Or, again, how easy to represent (third) "the great Emathian conqueror," that in the very opening of his career, whilst visiting Thebes with vengeance, nevertheless relented at the thought of literature, and

"Bade spare

The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower  
Went to the ground."

Alexander might have been represented amongst the colonnades of some Persian capital — Ecbatana or Babylon. Susa or Persepolis — in the act of receiving from Greece, as a *nuzzur* more awful than anything within the gift of the "barbaric East," a jewelled casket containing the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey;" creations that already have lived almost as long as the Pyramids.

Puritanically bald and odious therefore, in my eyes, was the hall up which my guardian and myself paced solemnly — though not Miltonically "riding up to the Soldan's chair," yet, in fact, within a more limited kingdom, advancing to the chair of a more absolute despot. This potentate was the head-master, or *archididasculus*, of the Manchester Grammar School; and that school was variously distinguished. It was (1.) ancient, having in fact been founded by a bishop of



Exeter in an early part of the sixteenth century, so as to be now, in 1856, more than 330 years old; (2.) it was rich, and was annually growing richer; and (3.) it was dignified by a beneficial relation to the magnificent University of Oxford.

The head-master at that time was Mr. Charles Lawson. In former editions of this work, I created him a doctor; my object being to evade too close an approach to the realities of the case, and consequently to personalities, which (though indifferent to myself) would have been in some cases displeasing to others. A doctor, however, Mr Lawson was not; nor in the account of law a clergyman. Yet most people, governed unconsciously by the associations surrounding their composite idea of a dignified schoolmaster, invested him with the clerical character. And in reality he *had* taken deacon's orders in the Church of England. But not the less he held himself to be a layman, and was addressed as such by all his correspondents of rank, who might be supposed best to understand the technical rules of English etiquette. Etiquette in such cases cannot entirely detach itself from law. Now, in English law, as was shown in Horne Tooke's case, the rule is, *once a clergyman, and always a clergyman*. The sacred character with which ordination clothes a man is indelible. But, on the other hand, who *is* a clergyman? Not he that has taken simply the initial orders of a deacon, so at least I have heard, but he that has taken the second and full orders of a priest. If otherwise, then there was a great mistake current amongst Mr. Lawson's friends in addressing him as an esquire.

Squire or not a squire, however, parson or not a par-



son — whether sacred or profane — Mr. Lawson was in some degree interesting by his position and his recluse habits. Life was over with him, for its hopes and for its trials. Or at most one trial yet awaited him, which was — to fight with a painful malady, and fighting to die. He still had his dying to do: he was in arrear as to *that*: else all was finished. It struck me (but, with such limited means for judging, I might easily be wrong) that his understanding was of a narrow order. But that did not disturb the interest which surrounded him now in his old age (probably seventy-five, or more), nor make any drawback from the desire I had to spell backwards and re-compose the text of his life. What had been his fortunes in this world? Had they travelled upwards or downwards? What triumphs had he enjoyed in the sweet and solemn cloisters of Oxford? What mortifications in the harsh world outside? Two only had survived in the malicious traditions of “his friends.” He was a Jacobite (as were so many amongst my dear Lancastrian compatriots); had drunk the Pretender’s health, and had drunk it in company with that Dr. Byrom who had graced the *symposium* by the famous equivocating *impromptu* \* to the health of that prince.

\* “*Equivocating impromptu* :” — The party had gathered in a tumultuary way; so that some Capulets had mingled with the Montagues, one of whom called upon Dr. Byrom to drink *The King, God bless him! and Confusion to the Pretender!* Upon which the doctor sang out —

“God bless the King, of church and state defender  
 God bless (no harm in *blessing*) the Pretender!  
 But who Pretender is, and who the King—  
 God bless us all! that’s quite another thing.”

Dr. Byrom was otherwise famous than as a Jacobite-- viz., as the

Mr. Lawson had therefore been obliged to witness the final prostration of his political party. That was his earliest mortification. His second, about seven years later, was, that he had been jilted; and with circumstances (at least so I heard) of cruel scorn. Was it that *he* had interpreted in a sense too flattering for himself ambiguous expressions of favor in the lady? or that she in cruel caprice had disowned the hopes which she had authorized? However this might be, half a century of soothing and reconciling years had cicatrized the wounds of Mr. Lawson's heart. The lady of 1752, if living in 1800, must be furiously wrinkled. And a strange metaphysical question arises: Whether, when the object of an impassioned love has herself faded into a shadow, the fiery passion itself can still survive as an abstraction, still mourn over its wrongs, still clamor for redress. I have heard of such cases. In Wordsworth's poem of "Ruth" (which was founded, as I happen to know, upon facts), it is recorded as an affecting incident, that, some months after the first frenzy of her disturbed mind had given way to medical treatment, and had lapsed into a gentler form of lunacy, she was dismissed from confinement; and upon finding herself uncontrolled among the pastoral scenes where she played away her childhood, she gradually fell back to the original habits of her life whilst yet undisturbed by sorrow. Something similar had happened to Mr. Lawson; and some time after

author of a very elaborate shorthand, which (according to some who have examined it) rises even to a philosophic dignity. David Hartley in particular said of it, "That if ever a philosophic language (as projected by Bishop Wilkins, by Leibnitz, &c.) should be brought to bear in that case Dr. Byrom's work would furnish the proper character for its notation."

his first shock, amongst other means for effacing that deep-grooved impression, he had labored to replace himself, as much as was possible, in the situation of a college student. In this effort he was assisted considerably by the singular arrangement of the house attached to his official station. For an English house it was altogether an oddity, being, in fact, built upon a Roman plan. All the rooms on both stories had their windows looking down upon a little central court. This court was quadrangular, but so limited in its dimensions, that by a Roman it would have been regarded as the *impluvium*: for Mr. Lawson, however, with a little exertion of fancy, it transmuted itself into a college quadrangle. Here, therefore, were held the daily "callings-over," at which every student was obliged to answer upon being named. And thus the unhappy man, renewing continually the fancy that he was still standing in an Oxford quadrangle, perhaps cheated himself into the belief that all had been a dream which concerned the caprices of the lady, and the lady herself a phantom. College usages also, which served to strengthen this fanciful *alibi* — such, for instance, as the having two plates arranged before him at dinner (one for the animal, the other for the vegetable food) — were reproduced in Millgate. One sole luxury, also somewhat costly, which, like most young men of easy income, he had allowed himself at Oxford, was now retained long after it had become practically useless. This was a hunter for himself, and another for his groom, which he continued to keep, in spite of the increasing war-taxes, many a year after he had almost ceased to ride. Once in three or four months he would have the horses saddled and brought out. Then, with

considerable effort, he swung himself into the saddle, moved off at a quiet amble, and, in about fifteen or twenty minutes, might be seen returning from an excursion of two miles, under the imagination that he had laid in a stock of exercise sufficient for another period of a hundred days. Meantime Mr. Lawson had sought his main consolation in the great classics of elder days. His senior *alumni* were always working their way through some great scenic poet that had shaken the stage of Athens; and more than one of his classes, never ending, still beginning, were daily solacing him with the gayeties of Horace, in his Epistles or in his Satires. The Horatian jests indeed to *him* never grew old. On coming to the *plagosus Orbilius*, or any other sally of pleasantry, he still threw himself back in his arm-chair, as he *had* done through fifty years, with what seemed heart-shaking bursts of sympathetic merriment. Mr. Lawson, indeed, could afford to be sincerely mirthful over the word *plagosus*. There are gloomy tyrants, exulting in the discipline of fear, to whom and to whose pupils this word must call up remembrances too degrading for any but affected mirth. Allusions that are too fearfully personal cease to be subjects of playfulness. Sycophancy only it is that laughs; and the artificial merriment is but the language of shrinking and grovelling deprecation. Different, indeed, was the condition of the Manchester Grammar School. It was honorable both to the masters and the upper boys, through whom only such a result was possible, that in that school, during my knowledge of it (*viz.*, during the closing year of the eighteenth century, and the two opening years of the nineteenth), all punishments, that appealed to the

sense of bodily pain, had fallen into disuse ; and this at a period long before any public agitation had begun to stir in that direction. How then was discipline maintained? It was maintained through the self-discipline of the senior boys, and through the efficacy of their example, combined with their system of rules. Noble are the impulses of opening manhood, where they are not utterly ignoble : at that period, I mean, when the poetic sense begins to blossom, and when boys are first made sensible of the paradise that lurks in female smiles. Had the school been entirely a day-school, too probable it is that the vulgar brawling tendencies of boys left to themselves would have prevailed. But it happened that the elder section of the school — those on the brink of manhood, and by incalculable degrees the more scholar-like section, all who read, meditated, or began to kindle into the love of literature — were boarders in Mr. Lawson's house. The students, therefore, of the house carried an overwhelming influence into the school. They were bound together by links of brotherhood ; whereas the day-scholars were disconnected. Over and above this it happened luckily that there was no playground, not the smallest, attached to the school ; that is, none was attached to the *upper* or *grammar* school. But there was also, and resting on the same liberal endowment, a *lower* school, where the whole machinery of teaching was applied to the lowest mechanical accomplishments of reading and writing. The hall in which this servile business was conducted ran under the upper school ; it was, therefore, I presume, a subterraneous duplicate of the upper hall. And, since the upper rose only by two or three feet above the level of the neigh-

boring streets, the lower school should naturally have been at a great depth *below* these streets. In that case it would be a dark crypt, such as we see under some cathedrals; and it would have argued a singular want of thoughtfulness in the founder to have laid one part of his establishment under an original curse of darkness. As the access to this plebeian school lay downwards through long flights of steps, I never found surplus energy enough for investigating the problem. But, as the ground broke away precipitously at that point into lower levels, I presume, upon consideration, that the subterranean crypt will be found open on one side to visitations from sun and moon. So that, for this base mechanic school there may, after all, have been a playground. But for ours in the upper air, I repeat, there was none; not so much as would have bleached a lady's pocket-handkerchief; and this one defect carried along with it unforeseen advantages.

Lord Bacon it is who notices the subtle policy which may lurk in the mere external figure of a table. A square table, having an undeniable head and foot, two polar extremities of what is highest and lowest, a perihelion and an aphelion, together with equatorial sides, opens at a glance a large career to ambition; whilst a circular table sternly represses all such aspiring dreams, and so does a triangular table. Yet if the triangle should be right-angled, then the Lucifer seated at the right angle might argue that he *subtended* all the tenants of the hypotenuse; being, therefore, as much nobler than they, as Atlas was nobler than the globe which he carried. It was by the way, some arrangement of this nature which constituted the original feature of distino



ion in John o' Groat's house, and not at all (as most people suppose) the high northern latitude of this house. John, it seems, finished the feuds for precedence — not by legislating this way or that — but by cutting away the possibility of such feuds through the assistance of a round table. The same principle must have guided King Arthur amongst his knights; Charlemagne amongst his paladins; and sailors in their effectual distribution of the peril attached to a mutinous remonstrance by the admirable device of a “round-robin.” Even two little girls, as Harrington remarks in his “Oceana,” have oftentimes hit upon an expedient through pure mother-wit, more effectual than all the schools of philosophy could have suggested, for insuring the impartial division of an orange; which expedient is, that either of the two shall divide, but then that the other shall have the right of choice. “You divide, and I choose.” Such is the formula; and an angel could not devise a more absolute guarantee for the equity of the division, than by thus forcing the divider to become the inheritor of any possible disadvantages that he may have succeeded in creating by his own act of division. In all these cases one seemingly trivial precaution opens, in the next stage, into a world of irresistible consequences. And in our case, an effect not less disproportionate followed out of that one accident, apparently so slight, that we had no playground. We of the seniority, who by thoughtfulness, and the conscious dignity of dealing largely with literature, were already indisposed to boyish sports, found, through the defect of a playground, that our choice and our pride were also our necessity. Even the proudest of us benefited by that coercion; for



many would else have sold their privilege of pride for an hour's amusement, and have become, at least, occasional conformists. A day more than usually fine, a trial of skill more than usually irritating to the sense of special superiority, would have seduced most of us in the end into the surrender of our exclusiveness. Indiscriminate familiarity would have followed as an uncontrollable result; since to mingle with others in common acts of business may leave the sense of reserve undisturbed: but all reserve gives way before a common intercourse in pleasure. As it was, what with our confederation through house-membership, with what our reciprocal sympathies in the problems suggested by books, we had become a club of boys (amongst whom might be four or five that were even young men, counting eighteen or nineteen years), altogether as thoughtful and as self-respecting as can often exist even amongst adults. Even the subterraneous school contributed something to our self-esteem. It formed a subordinate section of our own establishment, that kept before our eyes, by force of contrast, the dignity inherent in our own constitution. Its object was to master humble accomplishments that were within the reach of *mechanic* efforts: everything mechanic is limited; whereas we felt that *our* object, even if our name of *grammar* school presented that object in what seemed too limited a shape, was substantially noble, and tended towards the infinite. But in no long time I came too see that, as to the *name*, we were all of us under a mistake. Being asked what a *grammar* school indicates, what it professes to teach, there is scarcely any man who would not reply, "Teach? why it teaches grammar: what else?" But this is a mis

lake: as I have elsewhere explained, *grammatica* in this combination does not mean grammar (though grammar also obeys the movements of a most subtle philosophy), but *literature*. Look into Suetonius. Those "*grammatici*" whom he memorializes as an order of men flocking to Rome in the days of the Flavian family, were not *grammarians* at all, but what the French by a comprehensive name style *litterateurs* — that is they were men who (1.) studied literature; (2.) who taught literature; (3.) who practically produced literature. And, upon the whole, *grammatica* is perhaps the least objectionable Latin equivalent for our word *literature*.

Having thus sketched the characteristic points distinguishing the school and the presiding master (for of masters, senior and junior, there were four in this upper school), I return to my own inaugural examination. On this day, memorable to myself, as furnishing the starting-point for so long a series of days, saddened by haughty obstinacy on one side, made effective by folly on the other, no sooner had my guardian retired, than Mr. Lawson produced from his desk a volume of the "Spectator," and instructed me to throw into as good Latin as I could some paper of Steele's — not the whole, but perhaps a third part. No better exercise could have been devised for testing the extent of my skill as a Latinist. And here I ought to make an explanation. In the previous edition of these "Confessions," writing sometimes too rapidly, and with little precision in cases of little importance, I conveyed an impression which I had not designed, with regard to the true nature of my pretensions as a Grecian; and something of the same correction will apply to that narrower accomplish-

ment which was the subject of my present examination. Neither in Greek nor in Latin was my *knowledge* very extensive; my age made *that* impossible; and especially because in those days there were no decent guides through the thorny jungles of the Latin language, far less of the Greek. When I mention that the *Port Royal* Greek Grammar translated by Dr. Nugent was about the best key extant in English to the innumerable perplexities of Greek diction; and that, for the *res metrica*, Morell's valuable "Thesaurus," having then never been reprinted, was rarely to be seen, the reader will conclude that a schoolboy's *knowledge* of Greek could not be other than slender. Slender indeed was mine. Yet stop! *what* was slender? Simply my *knowledge* of Greek; for that knowledge stretches by tendency to the infinite; but not therefore my *command* of Greek. The *knowledge* of Greek must always hold some gross proportion to the time spent upon it, probably, therefore, to the age of the student; but the *command* over a language, the power of adapting it plastically to the expression of your own thoughts, is almost exclusively a gift of nature, and has very little connection with time. Take the supreme trinity of Greek scholars that flourished between the English Revolution of 1688 and the beginning of the nineteenth century — which trinity I suppose to be confessedly, Bentley, Valckenaer, and Porson — such are the men, it will be generally fancied, whose aid should be invoked, in the event of our needing some eloquent Greek inscription on a public monument. I am of a different opinion. The greatest scholars have usually proved to be the poorest composers in either of the classic languages. Sixty years ago, we had, from four

separate doctors, four separate Greek versions of "Gray's Elegy," all unworthy of the national scholarship. Yet one of these doctors was actually Porson's predecessor in the Greek chair at Cambridge. But as he (Dr. Cooke) was an obscure man, take an undeniable Grecian, of punctilious precision — viz., Richard Dawes, the well-known author of the "Miscellanea Critica." This man, a very *martinet* in the delicacies of Greek composition, — and who *should* have been a Greek scholar of some mark, since often enough he flew at the throat of Richard Bentley, — wrote and published a specimen of a Greek "Paradise Lost," and also two most sycophantic idyls addressed to George II. on the death of his "august" papa. It is difficult to imagine anything meaner in conception or more childish in expression than these attempts. Now, against *them* I will stake in competition a copy of iambic verses by a boy, who died, I believe, at sixteen — viz., a son of Mr. Pitt's tutor, Tomline, Bishop of Winchester.\* Universally I contend that the faculty of clothing the thoughts in a Greek dress is a function of natural sensibility, in a great degree disconnected from the extent or the accuracy of the writer's grammatical skill in Greek.

\* "*A copy of iambic verses:*" — They will be found in the work on the Greek article, by Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta, who was the boy's tutor. On this occasion I would wish to observe, that verses like Dawes's, meant to mimic Homer or Theocritus, or more generally dactylic hexameters, are perfectly useless as tests of power to think freely in Greek. If such verses are examined, it will be found that the orchestral magnificence of the metre, and the sonorous cadence of each separate line, absolutely *forces* upon the thoughts a mere necessity of being discontinuous. From this signal defect only iambic senarii are free; this metre possessing a power of plastic interfusion similar in kind, though inferior in degree, to the English blank verse when Miltonically written.

These explanations are too long. The reader will understand, as their sum, that what I needed in such a case was, not so much a critical familiarity with the syntax of the language, or a *copia verborum*, or great agility in reviewing the relations of one idea to another — so as to present modern and unclassical objects under such aspects as might suggest periphrases in substitution for direct names, where names could not be had, and everywhere to color my translation with as rich a display of idiomatic forms as the circumstances of the case would allow. I succeeded, and beyond my expectation. For once — being the first time that he had been known to do such a thing, but also the very last — Mr. Lawson did absolutely pay me a compliment. And with another compliment more than verbal he crowned his gracious condescensions — viz., with my provisional instalment in his highest class ; not the highest at that moment, since there was one other class above us ; but this other was on the wing for Oxford within some few weeks ; which change being accomplished, we (viz., I and two others) immediately moved up into the supreme place.

Two or three days after this examination — viz., on the Sunday following — I transferred myself to head-quarters at Mr. Lawson's house. About nine o'clock in the evening, I was conducted by a servant up a short flight of stairs, through a series of gloomy and unfurnished little rooms, having small windows but no doors, to the common room (as in Oxford it would technically be called) of the senior boys. Everything had combined to depress me. To leave the society of accomplished women — *that* was already a signal privation. The season besides was rainy, which in itself is a sure source

of depression ; and the forlorn aspect of the rooms completed my dejection. But the scene changed as the door was thrown open : faces kindling with animation became visible ; and from a company of boys, numbering sixteen or eighteen, scattered about the room, two or three, whose age entitled them to the rank of leaders, came forward to receive me with a courtesy which I had not looked for. The grave kindness and the absolute sincerity of their manner impressed me most favorably. I had lived familiarly with boys gathered from all quarters of the island at the Bath Grammar School ; and for some time (when visiting Lord Altamont at Eton) with boys of the highest aristocratic pretensions. At Bath and at Eton, though not equally, there prevailed a tone of higher polish ; and in the air, speech, deportment of the majority could be traced at once a premature knowledge of the world. They had indeed the advantage over my new friends in graceful self-possession ; but, on the other hand, the best of them suffered by comparison with these Manchester boys in the qualities of visible self-restraint and of self-respect. At Eton, high rank was distributed pretty liberally ; but in the Manchester school the parents of many boys were artisans, or of that rank ; some even had sisters that were menial servants ; and those who stood higher by pretensions of birth and gentle blood were, at the most, the sons of rural gentry or of clergymen. And I believe that, with the exception of three or four brothers, belonging to a clergyman's family at York, all were, like myself, natives of Lancashire. At that time my experience was too limited to warrant me in expressing any opinion, one way or the other, upon the relative pretensions — moral



and intellectual — of the several provinces in our island. But since then I have seen reason to agree with the late Dr. Cooke Taylor in awarding the præminence, as regards energy, power to face suffering, and other high qualities, to the natives of Lancashire. Even a century back, they were distinguished for the culture of refined tastes. In musical skill and sensibility, no part of Europe, with the exception of a few places in Germany, could pretend to rival them: and accordingly, even in Handel's days, but for the chorus-singers from Lancashire, his oratorios must have remained a treasure, if not absolutely sealed, at any rate most imperfectly revealed.

One of the young men, noticing my state of dejection, brought out some brandy — a form of alcohol which I, for my part, tasted now for the first time, having previously taken only wine, and never once in quantities to affect my spirits. So much the greater was my astonishment at the rapid change worked in my state of feeling — a change which at once reinstalled me in my natural advantages for conversation. Towards this nothing was wanting but a question of sufficient interest. And a question arose naturally out of a remark addressed by one of the boys to myself, implying that perhaps I had intentionally timed my arrival so as to escape the Sunday evening exercise? No, I replied; not at all; what *was* that exercise? Simply an off-hand translation from the little work of Grotius\* on the Evidences of Christianity. Did I know the book? No, I did not: all the direct knowledge which I had of Grotius was built upon his metrical translations into Latin of various fragments surviving from the Greek scenical poets, and these translations had struck me as exceedingly beauti-

\* Entitled *De Veritate Christianæ Religionis*.



ful. On the other hand, his work of highest pretension, "De Jure Belli et Pacis," so signally praised by Lord Bacon, I had not read at all; but I had heard such an account of it from a very thoughtful person, as made it probable that Grotius was stronger, and felt himself stronger, on literary than on philosophic ground. Then, with regard to his little work on the Mosaic and Christian revelations, I had heard very disparaging opinions about it; two especially. One amounted to no more than this — that the question was argued with a logic far inferior, in point of cogency, to that of Lardner and Paley. Here several boys interposed their loud assent, as regarded Paley in particular. Paley's "Evidences," at that time just seven years old, had already become a subject of study amongst them. But the other objection impeached not so much the dialectic acuteness as the learning of Grotius — at least, the appropriate learning. According to the anecdote current upon this subject, Dr. Edward Pococke, the great oriental scholar of England in the seventeenth century, when called upon to translate the little work of Grotius into Arabic or Turkish, had replied by pointing to the idle legend of Mahomet's pigeon or dove, as a reciprocal messenger between the prophet and heaven — which legend had been accredited and adopted by Grotius in the blindest spirit of credulity. Such a baseless fable, Pococke alleged, would work a double mischief: not only it would ruin the authority of that particular book in the East, but would damage Christianity for generations, by making known to the followers of the Prophet that their master was undervalued amongst the Franks on the authority of nursery tales, and that these tales were accredited by the leading Frankish scholars.

A twofold result of evil would follow: not only would our Christian erudition and our Christian scholars be scandalously disparaged; a consequence that in some cases might not be incompatible with a sense amongst Mahometans that the strength of Christianity itself was unaffected by the errors and blunders of its champions; but, secondly, there would be in this case a strong reaction against Christianity itself. Plausibly enough it would be inferred that a vast religious philosophy could have no powerful battery of arguments in reserve, when it placed its main anti-Mahometan reliance upon so childish a fable: since, allowing even for a blameless assent to this fable amongst nations having no direct intercourse with Mussulmans, still it would argue a shocking frailty in Christianity, that its main pleadings rested, not upon any strength of its own, but simply upon a weakness in its antagonist.

At this point, when the cause of Grotius seemed utterly desperate, G—— (a boy whom subsequently I had reason to admire as equally courageous, truthful, and far-seeing) suddenly changed the whole field of view. He offered no defence for the ridiculous fable of the pigeon; which pigeon, on the contrary, he represented as drawing in harness with that Christian goose which at one time was universally believed by Mahometans to lead the vanguard of the earliest Crusaders, and which, in a limited extent, really had been a true historical personage. So far he gave up Grotius as indefensible. But on the main question, and the very extensive question of his apparent imbecility when collated with Paley, etc., suddenly and in one sentence he revolutionized the whole logic of that comparison. Paley and Lardner, he

said, what was it that they sought? *Their* object was — avowedly to benefit by any argument, evidence, or presumption whatsoever, no matter whence drawn, so long as it was true or probable, and fitted to sustain the credibility of any element in the Christian creed. Well, was not *that* object common to them and to Grotius? Not at all. Too often had he (the boy G——) secretly noticed the abstinence of Grotius (apparently unaccountable) from certain obvious advantages of argument, not to suspect that, in narrowing his own field of disputation, he had a deliberate purpose, and was moving upon the line of some very different policy. Clear it was to *him*, that Grotius, for some reason, declined to receive evidence except from one special and limited class of witnesses. Upon this, some of us laughed at such a self-limitation as a wild bravado, recalling that rope-dancing feat of some verse-writers who, through each several stanza in its turn, had gloried in dispensing with some one separate consonant, some vowel, or some diphthong, and thus achieving a triumph such as crowns with laurel that pedestrian athlete who wins a race by hopping on one leg, or wins it under the inhuman condition of confining both legs within a sack. “*No, no,*” impatiently interrupted G——. “All such fantastic conflicts with self-created difficulties terminate in pure ostentation, and profit nobody. But the self-imposed limitations of Grotius had a special purpose, and realized a value not otherwise attainable.” If Grotius accepts no arguments or presumptions except from Mussulmans, from Infidels, or from those who rank as Neutrals, then has he adapted his book to a separate and peculiar audience. The Neutral man will hearken to authorities notoriously

Neutral; Mussulmans will show deference to the statements of Mussulmans; the Skeptic will bow to the reasonings of Skepticism. All these persons, that would have been repelled on the very threshold from such testimonies as begin in a spirit of hostility to themselves, will listen thoughtfully to suggestions offered in a spirit of conciliation; much more so if offered by people occupying the same ground at starting as themselves.

At the cost of some disproportion, I have ventured to rehearse this inaugural conversation amongst the leaders of the school. Whether G—— were entirely correct in this application of a secret key to the little work of Grotius, I do not know. I take blame to myself that I do not; for I also must have been called upon for my quota to the Sunday evening studies on the “De Veritate;” and must therefore have held in my hands the ready means for solving the question.\*

Meantime, as a solitary act of silent observation in a boy not fifteen, this deciphering idea of G——’s, in direct resistance to the received idea, extorted my admiration; and equally, whether true or false as regarded the immediate fact. That any person, in the very middle storm of chase, when a headlong movement carries all impulses into one current, should in the twinkling of an eye recall himself to the unexpected “doubles” of the game, wheel as *that* wheels, and sternly resist the in-

\* Some excuse, however, for my own want of energy is suggested by the fact, that very soon after my matriculation Mr. Lawson substituted for Grotius, as the Sunday evening lecture-book, Dr. Clark’s Commentary on the New Testament. “Out of sight, out of mind;” and in that way only can I account for my own neglect to clear up the question. Or perhaps, after all I *did* clear it up, and in a long *in*ter-march subsequently may have dropped it by the *wayside*.

instincts of the one preoccupying assumption, argues a sagacity not often heard of in boyhood. Was G—— right? In that case he picked a lock which others had failed to pick. Was he wrong? In that case he sketched the idea and outline of a better work (better, as more original and more special in its service) than any which Grotius has himself accomplished.

Not, however, the particular boy, but the particular school, it was my purpose, in this place, to signalize for praise and gratitude. In after years, when an undergraduate at Oxford, I had an opportunity of reading as it were in a mirror the characteristic pretensions and the average success of many celebrated schools. Such a mirror I found in the ordinary conversation and in the favorite reading of young gownsmen belonging to the many different colleges of Oxford. Generally speaking, each college had a filial connection (strict\* or not strict) with some one or more of our great public schools. These, fortunately for England, are diffused through all her counties: and as the main appointments to the capital offices in such *public* schools are often vested by law in Oxford or Cambridge, this arrangement guarantees a sound system of teaching; so that any failures in the result must presumably be due to the individual student. Failures, on the whole, I do not suppose that there were. Classical attainments, that might be styled even splendid, were not then, nor are now, uncommon. And yet in one great feature many of those schools, even the very best,

\* "*Strict or not strict:*" — In some colleges the claims of *alumni* from certain schools were absolute; in some, I believe, conditional; in others, again, concurrent with rival claims from favored schools or favored counties.

when thus tried by their fruits, left a painful memento of failure ; or rather not of failure as in relation to any purpose that they steadily recognized, but of *wilful* and *intentional* disregard as towards a purpose alien from any duty of theirs, or any task which they had ever undertaken — a failure, namely, in relation to *modern* literature — a neglect to unroll its mighty charts : and amongst this modern literature a spécial neglect (such as seems almost brutal) of our own English literature, though pleading its patent of precedency in a voice so trumpet-tongued. To myself, whose homage ascended night and day towards the great altars of English Poetry or Eloquence, it was shocking and revolting to find in high-minded young countrymen, burning with sensibility that sought vainly for a corresponding object, deep unconsciousness of an all sufficient object — namely, in that great inheritance of our literature which sometimes kindled enthusiasm in our public enemies. How painful to see or to know that vast revelations of grandeur and beauty are wasting themselves forèver — forests teeming with gorgeous life, floral wildernesses hidden inaccessiblely ; whilst, at the same time, in contraposition to that evil, behold a corresponding evil ; — viz., that with equal prodigality the great capacities of enjoyment are running also to waste, and are everywhere burning out unexercised — waste, in short, in the world of things *enjoyable*, balanced by an equal waste in the organs and the machineries of enjoyment ! This picture — would it not fret the heart of an Englishman ? Some years (say twenty) after the era of my own entrance at that Oxford which then furnished me with records so painful of slight regard to our national literature, behold at the

court of London a French ambassador, a man of genius blazing (as some people thought) with nationality, but, in fact, with something inexpressibly nobler and deeper — viz., patriotism. For true and unaffected patriotism will show its love in a noble form by sincerity and truth. But nationality, as I have always found, is mean; is dishonest; is ungenerous; is incapable of candor; and being continually besieged with temptations to falsehood, too often ends by becoming habitually mendacious. This Frenchman above all things valued literature: his own trophies of distinction were all won upon that field: and yet, when called upon to review the literature of Europe, he found himself conscientiously coerced into making his work a mere monument to the glory of one man, and that man the son of a hostile land. The name of Milton, in *his* estimate, swallowed up all others. This Frenchman was Chateaubriand. The personal splendor which surrounded him gave a corresponding splendor to his act. And because he, as an ambassador, was a representative man, this act might be interpreted as a representative act. The tutelary genius of France in this instance might be regarded as bending before that of England. But homage so free, homage so noble, must be interpreted and received in a corresponding spirit of generosity. It was not, like the testimony of Balaam on behalf of Israel, an unwilling submission to a hateful truth: it was a concession, in the spirit of saintly magnanimity, to an interest of human nature that, *as* such, transcended by many degrees all considerations merely national.

Now, then, with this unlimited devotion to one great **uminary** of our literary system embiazoned so conspic-



nously in the testimony of a Frenchman — that is, of one trained and privileged to be a public enemy — contrast the humiliating spectacle of young Englishmen suffered (so far as their training is concerned) to ignore the very existence of this mighty poet. Do I mean, then, that it would have been advisable to place the “Paradise Lost,” and the “Paradise Regained,” and the “Samson,” in the library of schoolboys? By no means. That mode of sensibility which deals with the Miltonic sublimity, is rarely developed in boyhood. And these divine works should in prudence be reserved to the period of mature manhood. But then it should be made known that they *are* so reserved; and upon what principle of reverential regard for the poet himself. In the meantime, selections from Milton, from Dryden, from Pope, and many other writers, though not everywhere appreciable by those who have but small experience of life, would not generally transcend the intellect or sensibility of a boy sixteen or seventeen years old. And beyond all other sections of literature, the two which I am going to mention are fitted (or might be fitted by skilful management) to engage the interest of those who are no longer boys, but have reached the age which is presumable in English university matriculation — viz., the close of the eighteenth year. Search through all languages, from Benares the mystical, and the banks of the Ganges, travelling westwards to the fountains of the Hudson, I deny that any two such *bibliothecæ* for engaging youthful interest could be brought together as these two which follow: —

First. In contradiction to M. Cousin’s recent audacious assertion (redeemed from the suspicion of mendacity

simply by the extremity of ignorance on which it reposes) that we English have no tolerable writer of prose subsequent to Lord Bacon, it so happens that the seventeenth century, and specially that part of it concerned in this case — viz., the latter seventy years (A. D. 1628–1700) — produced the highest efforts of eloquence (philosophic, but at the same time rhetorical and impassioned, in a degree unknown to the prose literature of France) which our literature possesses, and not a line of it but is posterior to the death of Lord Bacon. Donne, Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Milton, South, Barrow, form a *pleiäd*, a constellation of seven golden stars, such as no literature can match in their own class. From these seven writers, taken apart from all their contemporaries, I would undertake to build up an entire body of philosophy\* upon the supreme interests of humanity. One error of M. Cousin's doubtless lay in overlooking the fact — that all conceivable problems of philosophy can reproduce themselves under a theological mask : and thus he had absolved himself from reading many English books, as presumably mere professional pleadings of Protestant polemics, which are in fact mines inexhaustible of eloquence and philosophic speculation.

Secondly. A full abstract of the English drama from about the year 1580 to the period (say 1635) at which

\* "*Philosophy*:"—At this point it is that the main misconception would arise. Theology, and not philosophy, most people will fancy, is likely to form the staple of these writers. But I have elsewhere maintained, that the main bulk of English philosophy has always hidden itself in the English divinity. In Jeremy Taylor, for instance, are exhibited all the *practical* aspects of philosophy ; of philosophy as it bears upon Life, upon Ethics, and upon Transcendent "Judence — *i. e.*, briefly upon the Greek *summum bonum*.

it was killed by the frost of the Puritanical spirit seasoning all flesh for the Parliamentary War. No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and antimask, of impassioned life — breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing: —

“Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas  
Gaudia, discursus.” \*

— All this, but far more truly and adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated, whatsoever in fact our mediæval ancestors exhibited in their “Dance of Death,” drunk with tears and laughter, may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously colored. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this? The Athenian has in a great proportion perished; the Roman was killed prematurely by the bloody realities of the amphitheatre, as candle-light by day-light; the Spanish, even in the hands of Calderon, offers only undeveloped sketchings; and the French, besides other and profounder objections, to which no justice has yet been done, lies under the signal disadvantage of not having reached its meridian until sixty years (or two generations) after the English. In reality, the great period of the English drama was exactly closing as the French opened: † consequently the

\* “All that is done by men — movements of prayer, panic, wrath, revels of the voluptuous, festivals of triumph, or gladiatorship of the intellect.” *Juvenal*, in the prefatory lines which rehearse the prevailing themes of his own Satires gathered in the great harvests of Rome.

† It is remarkable that in the period immediately anterior to that of Corneille, a stronger and more *living* nature was struggling for utterance in French tragedy. Guizot has cited from an early drama (I forget whether of Rotrou or of Hardy) one scene most thoroughly im-

French lost the prodigious advantage for scenical effects of a romantic and picturesque age. This had vanished when the French theatre culminated; and the natural result was, that the fastidiousness of French taste, by this time too powerfully developed, stifled or distorted the free movements of French genius.

I beg the reader's pardon for this disproportioned digression, into which I was hurried by my love for our great national literature, my anxiety to see it amongst educational resources invested with a ministerial agency of far ampler character, but at all events to lodge a protest against that wholesale neglect of our supreme authors which leaves us open to the stinging reproach of "treading daily with our clouted shoon" (to borrow the words of Comus) upon that which high-minded foreigners regard as the one paramount jewel in our national diadem.

That reproach fell heavily, as my own limited experience inclined me to fear, upon most of our great public

passioned. The situation is that of a prince, who has fixed his love upon a girl of low birth. She is faithful and constant: but the courtiers about the prince, for malicious purposes of their own, calumniate her: the prince is deluded by the plausible air of the slanders which they disperse: he believes them; but not with the result (anticipated by the courtiers) of dismissing the girl from his thoughts. On the contrary, he is haunted all the more morbidly by her image; and in a scene which brings before us one of the vilest amongst these slanderers exerting himself to the uttermost in drawing off the prince's thoughts to alien objects, we find the prince vainly attempting any self-control, vainly striving to attend, still he is overruled by the tenderness of his sorrowing love into finding new occasions for awakening thoughts of the lost girl in the very words chiefly relied on for calling off his feelings from her image. The scene (as Guizot himself remarks) is thoroughly Shaksperian; and I venture to think that this judgment would have been countersigned by Charles Lamb.

schools, otherwise so admirably conducted.\* But from the Manchester Grammar School any such reproach altogether rebounded. My very first conversation with the boys had arisen naturally upon a casual topic, and had shown them to be tolerably familiar with the outline of the Christian polemics in the warfare with Jew, Mahometan, Infidel, and Sceptic. But this was an exceptional case; and naturally it happened that most of us sought for the ordinary subjects of our conversational discussions in literature — viz., in our own native literature. Here it was that I learned to feel a deep respect for my new school-fellows: deep it was, then; and a larger experience has made it deeper. I have since known many literary men, men whose profession was literature; who were understood to have dedicated themselves to literature; and who sometimes had with some one special section or little nook of literature an acquaintance critically minute. But amongst such men I have found but three or four who had a knowledge which came as near to what I should consider a comprehensive knowledge, as really existed amongst these boys collectively. What one boy had not, another had; and thus, by continual intercourse, the fragmentary contribution of one being integrated by the fragmentary contributions of others, gradually the attainments of each separate individual became, in some degree, the collective attainments of the whole senior common room. It is true, undoubtedly, that some parts of literature were inacces-

\* It will strike everybody that such works as the "Microcosm," conducted notoriously by Eton boys, and therefore, in part, by Canning, as one of their leaders at that period, must have an admirable effect, since, not only it must have made it the interest of each contributor, but must even have made it his necessity, to cultivate some acquaintance with his native literature.

sible, simply because the books were inaccessible to boys at school ; for instance, Froissart in the old translation by Lord Berners, now more than three centuries old ; and some parts were, to the young, essentially repulsive. But, measuring the general qualifications by that standard which I have since found to prevail amongst professional *litterateurs*, I felt more respectfully towards the majority of my senior school-fellows than ever I had fancied it possible that I should find occasion to feel towards any boys whatever. My intercourse with those amongst them who had any conversational talents, greatly stimulated my intellect.

This intercourse, however, fell within narrower limits soon after the time of my entrance. I acknowledge, with deep self-reproach, that every possible indulgence was allowed to me which the circumstances of the establishment made possible. I had, for example, a private room allowed, in which I not only studied, but also slept at night. The room being airy and cheerful, I found nothing disagreeable in this double use of it. Naturally, however, this means of retirement tended to sequester me from my companions ; for, whilst liking the society of some amongst them, I also had a deadly liking (perhaps a morbid liking) for solitude. To make my present solitude the more fascinating, my mother sent me five guineas *extra*, for the purchase of an admission to the Manchester Library ; a library which I should not at present think *very* extensive, but which, however, benefited in its composition, as also in its administration, by the good sense and intelligence of some amongst its original committees. These two luxuries were truly and indeed such ; but a third, from which I had antici-

patd even greater pleasure, turned out a total failure; and for a reason which it may be useful to mention, by way of caution to others. This was a pianoforte, together with the sum required for regular lessons from a music-master. But the first discovery I made was, that practice through eight or even ten hours a day was indispensable towards any great proficiency on this instrument. Another discovery finished my disenchantment; it was this. For the particular purpose which I had in view, it became clear that no mastery of the instrument, not even that of Thalberg, would be available. Too soon I became aware that to the deep voluptuous enjoyment of music, absolute *passiveness* in the hearer is indispensable. Gain what skill you please, nevertheless activity, vigilance, anxiety must always accompany an elaborate effort of musical execution; and so far is that from being reconcilable with the entrancement and lull essential to the true fruition of music, that even if you should suppose a vast piece of mechanism capable of executing a whole oratorio, but requiring, at intervals, a cooperating impulse from the foot of the auditor, even *that*, even so much as an occasional touch of the foot, would utterly undermine all your pleasure. A single psychological discovery, therefore, caused my musical anticipations to evanesce. Consequently, one of my luxuries burst like a bubble at an early stage. In this state of things, when the instrument had turned out a bubble, it followed naturally that the music-master should find himself to be a bubble. But he was so thoroughly good-natured and agreeable, that I could not reconcile myself to such a catastrophe. Meantime, though accommodating within certain limits, this music-



master was yet a conscientious man, and a man of honorable pride. On finding, therefore, that I was not seriously making any effort to improve, he shook hands with me one fine day, and took his leave forever. Unless it were to point a moral and adorn a tale, the piano had then become useless. It was too big to hang upon willows, and willows there were none in that neighborhood. But it remained for months as a lumbering monument of labor misapplied, of bubbles that had burst and of musical visions that, under psychological tests, had foundered forever.

Yes, certainly, this particular luxury — one out of three — had proved a bubble ; too surely this had foundered ; but not, therefore, the other two. The quiet study, lifted by two stories above the vapors of earth, and liable to no unseasonable intrusion ; the Manchester Library, so judiciously and symmetrically mounted in all its most attractive departments — no class disproportioned to the rest — these were no bubbles, these had not foundered. Oh, wherefore, then was it — through what inexplicable growth of evil in myself or in others — that now in the summer of 1802, when peace was brooding over all the land, peace succeeding to a bloody seven years' war, but peace which already gave signs of breaking into a far bloodier war, some dark sympathizing movement within my own heart, as if echoing and repeating in mimicry the political menaces of the earth, swept with storm-clouds across that otherwise serene and radiant dawn which should have heralded my approaching entrance into life. *Inexplicable* I have allowed myself to call this fatal error in my life, because such it *must* appear to others ; since, even to myself, so often as

I fail to realize the case by reproducing a reflex impression in kind, and in degree, of the suffering before which my better angel gave way — yes, even to myself this collapse of my resisting energies seems inexplicable. Yet again, in simple truth, now that it becomes possible, through changes worked by time, to tell the *whole* truth (and not, as in former editions, only a part of it), there really was no absolute mystery at all. But this case, in common with many others, exemplifies to my mind the mere impossibility of making full and frank “Confessions,” whilst many of the persons concerned in the incidents are themselves surviving, or (which is worse still), if themselves dead and buried, are yet vicariously surviving in the persons of near and loving kinsmen. Rather than inflict mortifications upon people so circumstanced, any kindhearted man will choose to mutilate his narrative; will suppress facts, and will mystify explanations. For instance, at this point in my record, it has become my right, perhaps I might say my duty, to call a particular medical man of the penultimate generation a blockhead; nay, doubtfully, to call him a criminal blockhead. But, could I do this without deep compunction, so long as sons and daughters of his were still living, from whom I, when a boy, had received most hospitable attentions? Often, on the very same day which brought home to my suffering convictions the atrocious ignorance of papa, I was benefiting by the courtesies of the daughters, and by the scientific accomplishments of the son. Not the less this man, at that particular moment when a crisis of gloom was gathering over my path, became effectually my evil genius. Not that singly perhaps he could have worked any durable amount of mischief; bu

he, as a coöperator unconsciously with others, sealed and ratified that sentence of stormy sorrow then hanging over my head. Three separate persons, in fact, made themselves unintentional accomplices in that ruin (a ruin reaching me even at this day by its shadows), which threw me out a homeless vagrant upon the earth before I had accomplished my seventeenth year. Of these three persons, foremost came myself, through my wilful despair and resolute abjuration of all *secondary* hope; since, after all, some mitigation was possible, supposing that perfect relief might *not* be possible. Secondly, came that medical ruffian, through whose brutal ignorance it happened that my malady had not been arrested before reaching an advanced stage. Thirdly, came Mr Lawson, through whose growing infirmities it had arisen that this malady ever reached its very earliest stage. Strange it was, but not the less a fact, that Mr. Lawson was gradually becoming a curse to all who fell under his influence, through pure zealotry of conscientiousness. Being a worse man, he would have carried far deeper blessings into his circle. If he could have reconciled himself to an imperfect discharge of his duties, he would not have betrayed his insufficiency for those duties. But this he would not hear of. He persisted in travelling over the appointed course to the last inch; and the consequences told most painfully upon the comfort of all around him. By the old traditionary usages of the school, going in at 7 A. M., we ought to have been dismissed for breakfast and a full hour's repose at nine. This hour of rest was in strict justice a *debt* to the students — liable to no discount either through the caprice or the tardiness of the supreme master. Yet such were

the gradual encroachments upon this hour, that at length the bells of the collegiate church which, by an ancient usage, rang every morning from half-past nine to ten, and through varying modifications of musical key and *rhythmus* that marked the advancing stages of the half-hour, regularly announced to us, on issuing from the school-room, that the bread and milk which composed our simple breakfast must be dispatched at a pace fitter for the fowls of the air than students of Grecian philosophy. But was no compensatory encroachment for our benefit allowed upon the next hour from ten to eleven? Not for so much as the fraction of a second. Inexorably as the bells, by stopping, announced the hour of ten, was Mr. Lawson to be seen ascending the steps of the school; and he that suffered most by this rigorous exaction of duties, could not allege that Mr. Lawson suffered less. If he required others to pay, he also paid up to the last farthing. The same derangement took place, with the same refusal to benefit by any indemnification, at what *should* have been the two-hours' pause for dinner. Only for some mysterious reason, resting possibly upon the family arrangements of the day-scholars, which, if once violated, might have provoked a rebellion of fathers and mothers, he still adhered faithfully to five o'clock P. M. as the closing hour of the day's labors.

Here then stood arrayed the whole machinery of mischief in good working order; and through six months or more, allowing for one short respite of four weeks, this machinery had been operating with effect. Mr. Lawson, to begin, had (without meaning it, or so much as perceiving it) barred up all avenues from morning to night through which any bodily exercise could be obtained.

Two or three chance intervals of five minutes each, and even these not consecutively arranged, composed the whole available fund of leisure out of which any stroll into the country could have been attempted. But in a great city like Manchester the very suburbs had hardly been reached before that little fraction of time was exhausted. Very soon after Mr. Lawson's increasing infirmities had begun to tell severely in the contraction of our spare time, the change showed itself powerfully in my drooping health. Gradually the liver became affected; and connected with that affection arose, what often accompanies such ailments, profound melancholy. In such circumstances, indeed under any the slightest disturbance of my health, I had authority from my guardians to call for medical advice: but I was not left to my own discretion in selecting the adviser. This person was not a physician, who would of course have expected the ordinary fee of a guinea for every visit; nor a surgeon; but simply an apothecary. In any case of serious illness, a physician would have been called in. But a less costly style of advice was reasonably held to be sufficient in any illness which left the patient strength sufficient to walk about. Certainly it ought to have been sufficient here: for no case could possibly be simpler. Three doses of calomel or blue pill, which unhappily I did not then know, would no doubt have reëstablished me in a week. But far better, as acting always upon me with a magical celerity and a magical certainty, would have been the authoritative prescription (privately notified to Mr. Lawson) of seventy miles' walking in each week. Unhappily my professional adviser was a comatose old gentleman, rich beyond all his needs, careless of his own prac-

vice, and standing under that painful necessity (according to the custom then regulating medical practice, which prohibited fees to apothecaries) of seeking his remuneration in excessive deluges of medicine. Me. however, out of pure idleness, he forbore to plague with any *variety* of medicines. With sublime simplicity he confined himself to one horrid mixture, that must have suggested itself to him when prescribing for a tiger. In ordinary circumstances, and with plenty of exercise, no creature could be healthier than myself. But my organization was perilously frail. And to fight simultaneously with such a malady and such a medicine, seemed really too much. The proverb tells us that three "fittings" are as bad as a fire. Very possibly. And I should think that, in the same spirit of reasonable equation, three such tiger-drenches must be equal to one apoplectic fit, or even to the tiger himself. Having taken two of them, which struck me as quite enough for one life, I declined to comply with the injunction of the label pasted upon each several phial — viz., *Repetatur haustus* ;\* and instead of doing any such dangerous thing, called upon Mr. — (the apothecary), begging to know if his art had not amongst its reputed infinity of resources any less abominable, and less shattering to a delicate system than this. "None whatever," he replied. Exceedingly kind he was: insisted on my drinking tea with his really aimiable daughters; but continued at intervals to repeat "None whatever — none whatever;" then as if rousing himself to an effort, he sang out loudly, "None whatever," which in this final utterance he toned down syllabically into,

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\* "Let the draught be repeated."

“whatever—ever—ver—er.” The whole wit of man, it seems, had exhausted itself upon the preparation of that one infernal mixture.

Now then we three — Mr. Lawson, the somnolent apothecary, and myself — had amongst us accomplished a climax of perplexity. Mr. Lawson, by mere dint of conscientiousness, had made health for me impossible. The apothecary had subscribed *his* little contribution, by ratifying and trebling the ruinous effect of his sedentariness. And for myself, as last in the series, it now remained to clench the operation by my own little contribution, all that I really had to offer — viz., absolute despair. Those who have ever suffered from a profound derangement of the liver, may happen to know that of human despondencies through all their infinite gamut none is more deadly. Hope died within me. I could not look for medical relief, so deep being my own ignorance, so equally deep being that of my official counsellor. I could not expect that Mr. Lawson would modify his system — his instincts of duty being so strong, his incapacity to face that duty so steadily increasing. “It comes then to this,” thought I, “that in myself only there lurks an arrear of help:” as always for every man the ultimate reliance should be on himself. But this *self* of mine seemed absolutely bankrupt; bankrupt of counsel or device — of effort in the way of action, or of suggestion in the way of plan. I had for two months been pursuing with one of my guardians, what I meant for a negotiation upon this subject; the main object being to obtain some considerable abbreviation of my school residence. But *negotiation* was a self-flattering name for such a correspondence, since there never had been from the begin-



ning any the slightest leaning on my guardian's part towards the shadow or pretence of a compromise. What compromise, indeed, was possible where neither party could concede a *part*, however small: the *whole* must be conceded, or nothing: since no *mezzo termine* was conceivable. In reality, when my eyes first glanced upon that disagreeable truth — that no opening offered for *reciprocal* concession, that the concession must all be on one side — naturally it struck me that no guardian could be expected to do *that*. At the same moment it also struck me, that my guardian had all along never for a moment been arguing with a view to any *practical* result, but simply in the hope that he might win over my assent to the reasonableness of what, reasonable or not, was settled immovably. These sudden discoveries, flashing upon me simultaneously, were quite sufficient to put a summary close to the correspondence. And I saw also, which strangely had escaped me till this general revelation of disappointments, that any individual guardian — even if he *had* been disposed to concession — was but one after all amongst five. Well; this amongst the general blackness really brought a gleam of comfort. If the whole object on which I had spent so much excellent paper and midnight tallow (I am ashamed to use so vile a word, and yet truth forbids me to say *oil*), if this would have been so nearly worthless when gained, then it became a kind of pleasure to have lost it. All considerations united now in urging me to waste no more of either rhetoric, tallow, or logic, upon my impassive granite block of a guardian. Indeed, I suspected, on reviewing his last communication, that he had just reached the last inch of his patience, or (in nautical diction) had “paid

out" the entire cable by which he swung; so that if I, acting on the apothecary's precedent of "*repetatur hauritus*," had endeavored to administer another bolus or draught of expostulation, he would have followed my course as to the tiger-drench, in applying his potential *No* to any such audacious attempt. To my guardian, meantime, I owe this justice — that, over and above the absence on my side of any arguments wearing even a colorable strength (for to him the suffering from biliousness must have been a mere word) he had the following weighty consideration to offer, "which even this foolish boy" (to himself he would say) "will think material some three years ahead." My patrimonial income, at the moment of my father's death, like that of all my brothers (then three), was exactly £150 per annum.\* Now according to the current belief, or boldly one might say, according to the avowed traditional maxim throughout England, such an income was too little for an undergraduate, keeping his four terms annually at Oxford or Cambridge. Too little — by how much? By £50: the adequate income being set down at just £200. Consequently the precise sum by which my income was supposed (falsely supposed, as subsequently my own experience convinced me) to fall short of the income needed for Oxford, was that very sum which the funds of the Manchester Grammar School allocated to every student

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\* £150 per annum: — Why in a long minority of more than fourteen years this was not improved, I never could learn. Nobody was open to any suspicion of positive embezzlement: and yet this case must be added to the other cases of passive neglects and negative injuries, which so extensively disfigure the representative picture of guardian ship all over Christendom.

resident for a period of three years; and allocated not merely through a corresponding period of three years, but of seven years. Strong should have been the reasons that could neutralize such overwhelming pleadings of just and honorable prudence for submitting to the further residence required. O reader, urge not the crying arguments that spoke so tumultuously against me. Too sorrowfully I feel them. Out of thirty-six months' residence required, I had actually completed nineteen — *i. e.*, the better half. Still, on the other hand, it is true that my sufferings were almost insupportable; and, but for the blind unconscious conspiracy of two persons, these sufferings would either (1) never have existed; or (2) would have been instantly relieved. In a great city like Manchester lay, probably, a ship-load of that same mercury which, by one fragment, not so large as an acorn, would have changed the color of a human life, or would have intercepted the heavy funeral knell — heavy, though it may be partially muffled — of his own fierce self-reproaches.

#### ELOPEMENT FROM MANCHESTER.<sup>44</sup>

BUT now, at last, came over me, from the mere excess of bodily suffering and mental disappointments, a frantic and rapturous re-agency. In the United States the case is well known, and many times has been described by travellers, of that furious instinct which, under a secret call for saline variations of diet, drives all the tribes of buffaloes for thousands of miles to the common centre of the "Salt-licks." Under such a compulsion does the locust, under such a compulsion does the leeming, traverse its mysterious path. They are deaf to danger

deaf to the cry of battle, deaf to the trumpets of death. Let the sea cross their path, let armies with artillery bar the road, even these terrific powers can arrest only by destroying; and the most frightful abysses, up to the very last menace of engulfment, up to the very instant of absorption, have no power to alter or retard the line of their inexorable advance.

Such an instinct it was, such a rapturous command — even so potent, and alas! even so blind — that, under the whirl of tumultuous indignation and of new-born hope, suddenly transfigured my whole being. In the twinkling of an eye, I came to an adamant resolution — not as if issuing from any act or any choice of my own, but as if passively received from some dark oracular legislation external to myself. That I would elope from Manchester — this was the resolution. *Abscond* would have been the word, if I had meditated anything criminal. But whence came the indignation, and the hope? The indignation arose naturally against my three tormentors (guardian, Archididascalus, and the professor of tigrology); for those who *do* substantially coöperate to one result, however little designing it, unavoidably the mind unifies as a hostile confederacy. But the hope — how shall I explain *that*? Was it the first-born of the resolution, or was the resolution the first-born of the hope? Indivisibly they went together, like thunder and lightning; or each interchangeably ran before and after the other. Under that transcendent rapture which the prospect of sudden liberation let loose, all that natural anxiety which should otherwise have interlinked itself with my anticipations was actually drowned in the blaze of joy, as the light of the planet Mercury is lost

and confounded on sinking too far within the blaze of the solar beams. Practically I felt no care at all stretching beyond two or three weeks. Not as being heedless and improvident; my tendencies lay generally in the other direction. No; the cause lurked in what Wordsworth, when describing the festal state of France during the happy morning-tide of her First Revolution (1788-1790), calls "*the senselessness of joy*:" this it was, joy — headlong — frantic — irreflective — and (as Wordsworth truly calls it), for that very reason, *sublime*\* — which swallowed up all capacities of rankling care or heart-corroding doubt. I was, I had been long a captive: I was in a house of bondage: one fulminating word — *Let there be freedom* — spoken from some hidden recess in my own will, had as by an earthquake rent asunder my prison gates. At any minute I could walk out. Already I trod by anticipation the sweet pastoral hills, already I breathed gales of the everlasting mountains, that to my feelings blew from the garden of Paradise; and in that vestibule of an earthly heaven, it was no more possible for me to see vividly or in any lingering detail the thorny cares which might hereafter multiply around me, than amongst the roses of June, and on the loveliest of June mornings, I could gather depression from the glooms of the last December. To go was settled. But *when* and *whither*? *When* could have but one answer, for on more reasons than one I needed summer weather: and as much of it as possible. Besides that, when August came, it would bring along with it my own

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\* "The senselessness of joy was then sublime." — Wordsworth at Calais in 1802 (see his sonnets), looking back through thirteen years to the great era of social resurrection, in 1788-9, from a sleep of ten centuries.

birthday: now, one codicil in my general vow of freedom had been, that my seventeenth birthday should not find me at school. Still I needed some trifle of preparation. Especially I needed a little money. I wrote, therefore, to the only confidential friend that I had — viz., Lady Carbery. Originally, as early friends of my mother's, both she and Lord Carbery had distinguished me at Bath and elsewhere, for some years, by flattering attentions; and for the last three years in particular, Lady Carbery, a young woman some ten years older than myself, and who was as remarkable for her intellectual pretensions as she was for her beauty and her benevolence, had maintained a correspondence with me upon questions of literature. She thought too highly of my powers and attainments, and everywhere spoke of me with an enthusiasm that, if I had been five or six years older, and had possessed any personal advantages, might have raised smiles at her expense. To her I now wrote, requesting the loan of five guineas. A whole week passed without any answer. This perplexed and made me uneasy: for her ladyship was rich by a vast fortune removed entirely from her husband's control; and, as I felt assured, would have cheerfully sent me twenty times the sum asked, unless her sagacity had suggested some suspicion (which seemed impossible) of the real purposes which I contemplated in the employment of the five guineas. Could I incautiously have said anything in my own letter tending that way? Certainly not; then why — But at that moment my speculations were cut short by a letter bearing a coronetted seal. It was from Lady Carbery, of course, and inclosed ten guineas instead of five. Slow in those

days were the mails; besides which, Lady Carbery happened to be down at the seaside, whither my letter had been sent after her. Now, then, including my own pocket-money, I possessed a dozen guineas, which seemed sufficient for my immediate purpose; and all ulterior emergencies, as the reader understands, I trampled under foot. This sum, however, spent at inns on the most economic footing, could not have held out for much above a calendar month; and as to the plan of selecting secondary inns, these are not always cheaper; but the main objection is — that in the solitary stations amongst the mountains (Cambrian no less than Cumbrian) there 's often no choice to be found: the high-priced inn is the only one. Even this dozen of guineas it became necessary to diminish by three. The age of "vails" and perquisites to three or four servants at any gentleman's house where you dined — this age, it is true, had passed away by thirty years perhaps. But that flagrant abuse had no connection at all with the English custom of distributing money amongst that part of the domestics whose daily labors may have been increased by a visitor's residence in the family for some considerable space of time. This custom (almost peculiar, I believe, to the English gentry) is honorable and just. I personally had been trained by my mother, who detested sordid habits, to look upon it as ignominious in a gentleman to leave a household without acknowledging the obliging services of those who cannot openly remind him of their claims. On this occasion, mere necessity compelled me to overlook the housekeeper: for to her I could not have offered less than two or three guineas and, as she was a fixture, I reflected that I might send



at a some future period. To three inferior servants I found that I ought not to give less than one guinea each: so much, therefore, I left in the hands of G——, the most honorable and upright of boys; since to have given it myself would have been prematurely to publish my purpose. These three guineas deducted, I still had nine, or thereabouts. And now all things were settled, except one: the *when* was settled, and the *how*; but not the *whither*. That was still *sub judice*.

My plan originally had been to travel northwards — viz., to the region of the English Lakes. That little mountainous district lying stretched like a pavilion between four well-known points — viz., the small towns of Ulverstone and Penrith as its two poles — south and north; between Kendal, again, on the east, and Egremont on the west, measuring on the one diameter about forty miles, and on the other perhaps thirty-five — had for me a secret fascination, subtle, sweet, fantastic, and even from my seventh or eight year, spiritually strong. The southern section of that district, about eighteen or twenty miles long, which bears the name of Furness, figures in the eccentric geography of English law as a section of Lancashire, though separated from that county by the estuary of Morecombe Bay: and therefore, as Lancashire happened to be my own native county, I had from childhood, on the strength of this mere legal fiction cherished as a mystic privilege, slender as a filament of air, some fraction of denizenship in the fairy little domain of the English lakes. The major part of these lakes lies in Westmoreland and Cumberland: but the sweet reposing little water of Esthwaite, with its few emerald fields, and the grander one of Coniston, with

the sublime cluster of mountain groups, and the little network of quiet dells lurking about its head \* all the way back to Grasmere, lie in or near the upper chamber of Furness; and all these, together with the ruins of the once glorious abbey, had been brought out not many years before into sunny splendor by the great enchantress of that generation. — Anne Radcliffe. But more even than Anne Radcliffe had the landscape painters, so many and so various, contributed to the glorification of the English lake district; drawing out and impressing upon the heart the sanctity of repose in its shy recesses — its Alpine grandeurs in such passes as those of Wastdale-head, Langdale-head, Borrowdale, Kirkstone, Hawsdale, &c., together with the monastic peace which seems to brood over its peculiar form of pastoral life, so much nobler (as Wordsworth notices), in its stern simplicity

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\* “*Its head* :” — That end of a lake which receives the rivulets and brooks feeding its waters, is locally called its *head*; and in continuation of the same constructive image, the counter terminus, which discharges its surplus water, is called its *foot*. By the way, as a suggestion from this obvious distinction, I may remark, that in all cases the very existence of a head and a foot to any sheet of water defeats the malice of Lord Byron’s sneer against the lake poets, in calling them by the contemptuous designation of “*pond poets* ;” a variation which some part of the public readily caught up as a natural reverberation of that spitefulness, so petty and apparently so groundless, which notoriously Lord Byron cherished against Wordsworth steadily, and more fitfully against Southey. The effect of transforming a living image — an image of restless motion — into an image of foul stagnation was tangibly apprehensible. But what was it that contradistinguished the “*rivi lacus*” of Virgil from rotting ponds mantled with verdant slime? To have, or *not* to have, a head and a foot (*i. e.*, a principle of perpetual change), is at the very heart of this distinction; and to substitute for *lake* a term which ignores and negatives the very differential principle that constitutes a lake — *viz.*, its current and its eternal mobility — is to offer an insult, in which the insulted party has no interest or concern

and continual conflict with danger hidden in the vast draperies of mist overshadowing the hills, and amongst the armies of snow and hail arrayed by fierce northern winters, than the effeminate shepherd's life in the classical Arcadia, or in the flowery pastures of Sicily.

Amongst these attractions that drew me so strongly to the Lakes, there had also by that time arisen in this lovely region the deep deep magnet (as to me *only* in all this world it then was) of William Wordsworth. Inevitably this close connection of the poetry which most of all had moved me with the particular region and scenery that most of all had fastened upon my affections, and led captive my imagination, was calculated, under ordinary circumstances, to impress upon my fluctuating deliberations a summary and decisive bias. But the very depth of the impressions which had been made upon me, either as regarded the poetry or the scenery, was too solemn and (unaffectedly I may say it) too spiritual, to clothe itself in any hasty or chance movement, as at all adequately expressing its strength, or reflecting its hallowed character. If you, reader, were a devout Mahometan, throwing gazes of mystical awe daily towards Mecca, or were a Christian devotee looking with the same rapt adoration to St. Peter's at Rome, or to El Kodah — the Holy City of Jerusalem — (so called even amongst the Arabs, who hate both Christian and Jew), how painfully would it jar upon your sensibilities, if some friend, sweeping past you upon a high road, with a train (according to the circumstances) of dromedaries or of wheel carriages, should suddenly pull up, and say, "Come, old fellow, jump up alongside of me, I'm off for the Red Sea, and here's a spare dromedary;" or "off

for Rome, and here's a well-cushioned barouche ;" reasonable and convenient it might happen that the invitation were ; but still it would shock you that a journey which, with or without your consent, could not *but* assume the character eventually of a saintly pilgrimage, should arise and take its initial movement upon a casual summons, or upon a vulgar opening of momentary convenience. In the present case, under no circumstances should I have dreamed of presenting myself to Wordsworth. The principle of " veneration " (to speak phrenologically) was by many degrees too strong in me for any such overture on my part. Hardly could I have found the courage to meet and to answer such an overture coming from *him*. I could not even tolerate the prospect (as a bare possibility) of Wordsworth's hearing my name first of all associated with some case of pecuniary embarrassment. And apart from all *that*, it vulgarized the whole " interest " (no other term can I find to express the case collectively) — the whole " interest " of poetry and the enchanted land: equally it vulgarized person and thing, the vineyard and the vintage, the gardens and the ladies, of the Hesperides, together with all their golden fruitage, if I should rush upon them in a hurried and thoughtless state of excitement. I remembered the fine caution on this subject involved in a tradition preserved by Pausanias. Those (he tells us) who visited by night the great field of Marathon (where at certain times phantom cavalry careered — flying and pursuing) in a temper of vulgar sight-seeking, and under no higher impulse than the degrading one of curiosity, were met and punished severely in the dark, by the same sort of people, I presume, as those who handled Falstaff s4

roughly in the venerable shades of Windsor : whilst loyal visitors, who came bringing a true and filial sympathy with the grand deeds of their Athenian ancestors, who came as children of the same hearth, met with the most gracious acceptance, and fulfilled all the purposes of a pilgrimage or sacred mission. Under my present circumstances, I saw that the very motives of love and honor, which would have inclined the scale so powerfully in favor of the northern lakes, were exactly those which drew most heavily in the other direction — the circumstances being what they were as to hurry and perplexity. And just at that moment suddenly unveiled itself another powerful motive against taking the northern direction — viz., consideration for my mother — which made my heart recoil from giving her too great a shock ; and in what other way could it be mitigated than by my personal presence in a case of emergency ? For such a purpose North Wales would be the best haven to make for, since the road thither from my present home lay through Chester — where at that time my mother had fixed her residence.

If I had hesitated (and hesitate I did very sincerely) about such a mode of expressing the consideration due to my mother, it was not from any want of decision in my feeling, but really because I feared to be taunted with this act of tenderness, as arguing an exaggerated estimate of my own importance in my mother's eyes. To be capable of causing any alarming shock, must I not suppose myself an object of special interest ? No : I did not agree to that inference. But no matter. Better to stand ten thousand sneers, than one abiding pang, such as time could not abolish, of bitter self-reproach. So I

resolved to face this taunt without flinching, and to steer a course for St. John's Priory — my mother's residence near Chester. At the very instant of coming to this resolution, a singular accident occurred to confirm it. On the very day before my rash journey commenced, I received through the post-office a letter bearing this address in a foreign handwriting — *A Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy, Chester*. This iteration of the *Monsieur* as a courteous French fashion\* for effecting something equivalent to our own *Esquire*, was to me at that time an unintelligible novelty. The best way to explain it was to read the letter, which, to the extent of *mon possible*, I did; but vainly attempted to decipher. So much, however, I spelled out as satisfied me that the letter could not have been meant for myself. The post-mark was, I think, *Hamburgh*: but the date within was from some place in Normandy; and eventually it came out that the person addressed was a poor emigrant, some relative of Quatremère de Quincy,† who had come to Chester, prob-

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\* “*As a courteous French fashion:*” — And not at all a modern fashion. That famous Countess of Derby (Charlotte de Tremouille) who presided in the defence of Lathom House (which, and not Knowsley, was then the capital domicile of the Stanleys), when addressing Prince Rupert, sometimes superscribes her envelope *A Monseigneur le Prince Rupert*, but sometimes *A Monsieur Monsieur le Prince Rupert*. This was in 1644, the year of Marston Moor, and the penultimate year of the Parliamentary War.

† “*De Quincy:*” — The family of De Quincey, or Quincy, or Quincie (spelt of course, like all proper names, under the anarchy prevailing as to orthography until the last one hundred and fifty years, in every possible form open to human caprice), was originally Norwegian. Early in the eleventh century this family emigrated from Norway to the South and since then it has thrown off three separate swarms — French, English, and Anglo-American, each of which writes the name with its own slight variations. A brief outline of their migrations will be found in the Appendix.

ably as a teacher of French; and now in 1802 found his return to France made easy by the brief and hollow peace of Amiens. Such an obscure person was naturally unknown to any English post-office; and the letter had been forwarded to myself, as the oldest male member of a family at that time necessarily well known in Chester.

I was astonished to find myself translated by a touch of the pen not only into a *Monsieur*, but even into a self-multiplied *Monsieur*; or, speaking algebraically, into the square of Monsieur; having a chance at some future day of being perhaps cubed into Monsieur<sup>3</sup>. From the letter, as I had hastily torn it open, out dropped a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith for somewhere about forty guineas. At this stage of the revelations opening upon me, it might be fancied that the interest of the case thickened: since undoubtedly, if this windfall could be seriously meant for myself, *and no mistake*, never descended upon the head of man, in the outset of a perilous adventure, aid more seasonable, nay, more melodramatically critical. But alas! my eye is quick to value the logic of evil chances. Prophet of evil I ever am to myself: forced forever into sorrowful auguries that I have no power to hide from my own heart, no, not through one night's solitary dreams. In a moment I saw too plainly that I was not Monsieur<sup>2</sup>. I might be *Monsieur*, but not *Monsieur to the second power*. Who indeed could be *my* debtor to the amount of forty guineas? If there really *was* such a person, why had he been so many years in liquidating his debt? How shameful to suffer me to enter upon my seventeenth year, before he made known his debt or even his amiable



existence. Doubtless, in strict morals, this dreadful procrastination could not be justified. Still, as the man was apparently testifying his penitence, and in the most practical form (viz., payment), I felt perfectly willing to grant him absolution for past sins, and a general release from all arrears, if any should remain, through all coming generations. But alas! the mere seasonableness of the remittance floored my hopes. A five-guinea debtor might have been a conceivable being: such a debtor might exist in the flesh: *him* I could believe in; but further my faith would not go; and if the money were, after all, *bonâ fide* meant for myself, clearly it must come from the Fiend: in which case it became an open question whether I ought to take it. At this stage the case had become a Sphinx's riddle; and the solution, if any, must be sought in the letter. But, as to the letter, O heaven and earth! if the Sphinx of old conducted her intercourse with Oedipus by way of letter, and propounded her wicked questions through the post-office of Thebes, it strikes me that she needed only to have used French penmanship, in order to baffle that fatal decipherer of riddles forever and ever. At Bath, where the French emigrants mustered in great strength (six thousand, I have heard) during the three closing years of the last century, I, through my mother's acquaintance with several leading families amongst them, had gained a large experience of French calligraphy. From this experience I had learned that the French aristocracy still persisted (*did* persist at that period — 1797–1800) in a traditional contempt for all accomplishments of that class as clerkly and plebeian, fitted only (as Shakspeare says, when recording similar prejudices amongst his own

countrymen) to do "yeoman's service." One and all they delegated the care of their spelling to *valets* and *femmes-de-chambre*; sometimes even those persons who scoured their blankets and counterpanes, scoured their spelling — that is to say, their week-day spelling; but as to their Sunday spelling, that superfine spelling which they reserved for their efforts in literature, this was consigned to the care of compositors. Letters written by the royal family of France in 1792–3 still survive, in the memoirs of Cléry and others amongst their most faithful servants, which display the utmost excess of ignorance as to grammar and orthography. Then, as to the penmanship, all seemed to write the same hand, and with the same piece of most ancient wood, or venerable skewer; all alike scratching out stiff perpendicular letters, as if executed (I should say) with a pair of snuffers. I do not speak thus in any spirit of derision. Such accomplishments were *wilfully* neglected, and even ambitiously, as if in open proclamation of scorn for the arts by which humbler people oftentimes got their bread. And a man of rank would no more conceive himself dishonored by any deficiencies in the snobbish accomplishments of penmanship, grammar, or correct orthography, than a gentleman amongst ourselves by inexpertness in the mystery of cleaning shoes, or of polishing furniture. The result, however, from this systematic and ostentatious neglect of calligraphy is oftentimes most perplexing to all who are called upon to decipher their MSS. It happens, indeed, that the product of this carelessness thus far differs: always it is coarse and inelegant, but sometimes (say in  $\frac{1}{20}$ th of the cases) it becomes specially legible. Far otherwise was the case before me. Being

greatly hurried on this my farewell day, I could not make out two consecutive sentences. Unfortunately one-half of a sentence sufficed to show that the inclosure belonged to some needy Frenchman living in a country not his own, and struggling probably with the ordinary evils of such a condition — friendlessness and exile. Before the letter came into my hands, it had already suffered some days' delay. When I noticed this, I found my sympathy with the poor stranger naturally quickened. Already, and unavoidably, he had been suffering from the vexation of a letter delayed; but henceforth, and continually more so, he must be suffering from the anxieties of a letter gone astray. Throughout this farewell day I was unable to carve out any opportunity for going up to the Manchester post-office; and without a distinct explanation in my own person, exonerating myself, on the written acknowledgment of the post-office, from all farther responsibility, I was most reluctant to give up the letter. It is true, that the necessity of committing a forgery (which crime in those days was punished inexorably with death), before the money could have been fraudulently appropriated, would, *if made known to the public*, have acquitted any casual holder of the letter from all suspicion of dishonest intentions. But the danger was, that during the suspense and progress of the case, whilst awaiting its final settlement, ugly rumors should arise and cling to one's name amongst the many that would hear only a fragmentary version of the whole affair.

At length all was ready: midsummer, like an army with banners, was moving through the heavens: already the longest day had passed; those arrangements, few

and imperfect, through which I attempted some partial evasion of disagreeable contingencies likely to arise, had been finished: what more remained for me to do of things that I was able to do? None; and yet, though now at last free to move off, I lingered; lingered as under some sense of dim perplexity, or even of relenting love for the very captivity itself which I was making so violent an effort to abjure, but more intelligibly for all the external objects — living or inanimate — by which that captivity had been surrounded and gladdened. What I was hastening to desert, nevertheless I grieved to desert; and but for the foreign letter, I might have long continued to loiter and procrastinate. That, however, through various and urgent motives which it suggested, quickened my movements; and the same hour which brought this letter into my hands, witnessed my resolution (uttered *audibly* to myself in my study), that early on the next day I would take my departure. A day, therefore, had at length arrived, had somewhat suddenly arrived, which would be the last, the very last, on which I should make my appearance in the school.

It is a just and a feeling remark of Dr. Johnson's that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is to say, which we have been long in the habit of doing), without sadness of heart. The secret sense of a farewell or testamentary act I carried along with me into every word or deed of this memorable day. Agent or patient, singly or one of a crowd, I heard forever some sullen echo of valediction in every change, casual or periodic, that varied the revolving hours from morning to night. Most of all I felt this valedictory

sound as a pathetic appeal, when the closing hour of five P. M. brought with it the solemn evening service of the English Church — read by Mr. Lawson; read now, as always, under a reverential stillness of the entire school. Already in itself, without the solemnity of prayers, the decaying light of the dying day suggests a mood of pensive and sympathetic sadness. And if the changes in the light are less impressively made known so early as five o'clock in the depth of summer-tide, not the less we are sensible of being as near to the hours of repose, and to the secret dangers of the night, as if the season were mid-winter. Even thus far there was something that oftentimes had profoundly impressed me in this evening liturgy, and its special prayer against the perils of darkness. But greatly was that effect deepened by the symbolic treatment which this liturgy gives to this darkness and to these perils. Naturally, when contemplating that treatment, I had been led vividly to feel the memorable *rhabdomancy*\* or magical power of evocation which

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\* "*Rhabdomancy*:" — The Greek word *manteia* (*μαντεία*), represented by the English form *mancy*, constitutes the stationary element in a large family of compounds: it means *divination*, or the art of magically deducing some weighty inference (generally prophetic) from any one of the many dark sources sanctioned by Pagan superstition. And universally the particular source relied on is expressed in the prior half of the compound. For instance, *oneiros* is the Greek word for a dream; and therefore *oneiromancy* indicates that mode of prophecy which is founded upon the interpretation of dreams. *Ornis*, again (in the genitive case *ornithos*) is the common Greek word for a bird; accordingly *ornithomancy* means prophecy founded on the particular mode of flight noticed amongst any casual gathering of birds. *Cheir* (*χείρ*) is Greek for the hand; whence *cheiromancy* expresses the art of predicting a man's fortune by the lines in his hand, or (under its Latin form from *palma*) *palmistry*. *Nekros*, a dead man, and consequently *necromancy*, prophecy founded on the answer extorted

Christianity has put forth here and in parallel cases. The ordinary physical rhabdomantist, who undertakes

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either from phantoms, as by the Witch of Endor; or from the corpse itself, as by Lucan's witch Erietho. I have allowed myself to wander into this ample illustration of the case, having for many years been taxed by ingenuous readers (confessing their own classical ignorance) with too scanty explanations of my meaning. I go on to say that the Greek word *rhabdos* (ῥάβδος), a rod — not that sort of rod which the Roman lictors carried, viz., a bundle of twigs, but a wand about as thick as a common cedar pencil, or, at most, as the ordinary brass rod of stair-carpets — this, when made from a willow-tree, furnished of old, and furnishes to this day in a southern county of England, a potent instrument of divination. But let it be understood that *divination* expresses an idea ampler by much than the word *prophecy*: whilst even this word *prophecy*, already more limited than divination, is most injuriously narrowed in our received translation of the Bible. To unveil or decipher what is hidden — that is, in effect, the meaning of divination. And accordingly, in the writings of St. Paul, the phrase *gifts of prophecy* never once indicates what the English reader supposes, but *exegetic* gifts, gifts of interpretation applied to what is dark, of analysis applied to what is logically perplexed, of expansion applied to what is condensed, of practical improvement applied to what might else be overlooked as purely speculative. In Somersetshire, which is a county the most ill-watered of all in England, upon building a house, there arises uniformly a difficulty in selecting a proper spot for sinking a well. The remedy is, to call in a set of local rhabdomantists. These men traverse the adjacent ground, holding the willow rod horizontally: wherever that dips, or inclines itself spontaneously to the ground, *there* will be found water. I have myself not only seen the process tried with success, but have witnessed the enormous trouble, delay, and expense, accruing to those of the opposite faction who refused to benefit by this art. To pursue the tentative plan (*i. e.*, the plan of trying for water by boring at hap-hazard) ended, so far as I was aware, in multiplied vexation. In reality, these poor men are, after all, more philosophic than those who scornfully reject their services. For the artists obey unconsciously the logic of Lord Bacon: *they* build upon a long chain of induction, upon the uniform results of their life-long experience. But the counter faction do not deny this experience: all they have to allege is, that, agreeably to any laws known to themselves *à priori*, there ought not to be any

to evoke from the dark chambers of our earth wells of water lying far below its surface, and more rarely to evoke minerals, or hidden deposits of jewels and gold, by some magnetic sympathy between his rod and the occult object of his divination, is able to indicate the spot at which this object can be hopefully sought for. Not otherwise has the marvellous magnetism of Christianity called up from darkness sentiments the most august, previously inconceivable — formless — and without life; for previously there had been no religious philosophy equal to the task of ripening such sentiments; but also, at the same time, by incarnating these sentiments in images of corresponding grandeur, has so exalted their character as to lodge them eternally in human hearts.

Flowers for example, that are so pathetic in their beauty, frail as the clouds, and in their coloring as gorgeous as the heavens, had through thousands of years been the heritage of children — honored as the jewelry of God only by *them*, when suddenly the voice of Christianity, countersigning the voice of infancy, raised them to a grandeur transcending the Hebrew throne, although founded by God himself, and pronounced Solomon in all his glory not to be arrayed like one of these. Winds

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such experience. Now, a sufficient course of facts overthrows all antecedent plausibilities. Whatever science or scepticism may say, most of the teakettles in the vale of Wrington are filled by *rhabdomancy*. And after all, the supposed *à priori* scruples against this rhabdomancy are only such scruples as would, antecedently to a trial, have pronounced the mariner's compass impossible. There is in both cases alike a blind sympathy of some unknown force, which no man can explain, with a passive index that practically guides you aright — even if Mephistopheles should be at the bottom of the affair.



again, hurricanes, the eternal breathings soft or loud, of Æolian power, wherefore had they, raving or sleeping, escaped all moral arrest and detention? Simply because vain it were to offer a nest for the reception of some new moral birth, whilst no religion is yet moving amongst men that can furnish such a birth. Vain is the image that should illustrate a heavenly sentiment, if the sentiment is yet unborn. Then, first, when it had become necessary to the purposes of a spiritual religion that the spirit of man, as the fountain of all religion, should in some commensurate reflex image have its grandeur and its mysteriousness emblazoned, suddenly the pomp and mysterious path of winds and tempests, blowing whither they list, and from what fountains no man knows, are cited from darkness and neglect, to give and to receive reciprocally an impassioned glorification, where the lower mystery enshrines and illustrates the higher. Call for the grandest of all earthly spectacles, what is *that*? It is the sun going to his rest. Call for the grandest of all human sentiments, what is *that*? It is, that man should forget his anger before he lies down to sleep. And these two grandeurs, the mighty sentiment and the mighty spectacle are by Christianity married together.

Here again, in this prayer, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!" were the darkness and the great shadows of night made symbolically significant: these great power, Night and Darkness, that belong to original Chaos, were made representative of the perils that continually menace poor afflicted human nature. With deepest sympathy I accompanied the prayer against the perils of darkness — perils that I seemed to see, in the ambush of midnight solitude, brooding around

the beds of sleeping nations; perils from even worse forms of darkness shrouded within the recesses of blind human hearts; perils from temptations weaving unseen snares for our footing; perils from the limitations of our own misleading knowledge.

WANDERINGS IN NORTH WALES.<sup>45</sup>

ON leaving Manchester, by a southwestern route, towards Chester and Wales, the first town that I reached (to the best of my remembrance) was Altrincham — colloquially called *Awtrigem*. When a child of three years old, and suffering from the hooping-cough, I had been carried for change of air to different places on the Lancashire coast; and, in order to benefit by as large a compass as possible of varying atmospheres, I and my nurse had been made to rest for the first night of our tour at this cheerful little town of Altrincham. On the next morning, which ushered in a most dazzling day of July, I rose earlier than my nurse fully approved: but in no long time she found it advisable to follow my example; and, after putting me through my morning's drill of ablutions and the Lord's prayer, no sooner had she fully arranged my petticoats, than she lifted me up in her arms, threw open the window, and let me suddenly look down upon the gayest scene I had ever beheld — viz., the little market-place of Altrincham, at eight o'clock in the morning. It happened to be the market-day; and I, who till then had never consciously been in any town whatever, was equally astonished and delighted with the novel gayety of the scene. Fruits, such as can be had in July, and flowers were scattered about in profusion even the stalls of the butchers, from their brilliant clean

liness, appeared attractive: and the bonny young women of Altrincham were all tripping about in caps and aprons coquetishly disposed. The general hilarity of the scene at this early hour, with the low murmurings of pleasurable conversation and laughter, that rose up like a fountain to the open window, left so profound an impression upon me that I never lost it. All this occurred, as I have said, about eight o'clock on a superb July morning. Exactly at that time of the morning, on exactly such another heavenly day of July, did I, leaving Manchester at six A. M., naturally enough find myself in the centre of the Altrincham market-place. Nothing had altered. There were the very same fruits and flowers; the same bonny young women tripping up and down in the same (no, *not* the same) coquettish bonnets; everything was apparently the same: perhaps the window of my bedroom was still open, only my nurse and I were not looking out; for alas! on recollection, fourteen years precisely had passed since then. Breakfast time, however, is always a cheerful stage of the day; if a man can forget his cares at any season, it is then; and after a walk of seven miles it is doubly so. I felt it at the time, and have stopped, therefore, to notice it, as a singular coincidence, that twice, and by the merest accident, I should find myself, precisely as the clocks on a July morning were all striking eight, drawing inspiration of pleasurable feelings from the genial sights and sounds in the little market-place of Altrincham. There I breakfasted; and already by the two hours' exercise I felt myself half restored to health. After an hour's rest, I started again upon my journey; all my gloom and despondency were already retiring to the rear; and, as I left Alt-

rincham, I said to myself, "All places, it seems, are not Whispering Galleries." The distance between Manchester and Chester *was* about forty miles. What it *is* under railway changes, I know not. This I planned to walk in two days; for, though the whole might have been performed in one, I saw no use in exhausting myself; and my walking powers were rusty from long disuse. I wished to bisect the journey; and, as nearly as I could expect — *i. e.*, within two or three miles — such a bisection was attained in a clean roadside inn, of the class, so commonly found in England. A kind, motherly landlady, easy in her circumstances, having no motive for rapacity, and looking for her livelihood much less to her inn than to her farm, guaranteed to me a safe and profound night's rest. On the following morning there remained not quite eighteen miles between myself and venerable Chester. Before I reached it, so mighty now (as ever before and since) had become the benefit from the air and the exercise, that oftentimes I felt inebriated and crazy with ebullient spirit. But for the accursed letter, which sometimes

"Came over me,  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,"

I should have too much forgot my gravity under this new-born health. For two hours before reaching Chester, from the accident of the southwest course which the road itself pursued, I saw held up aloft before my eyes that matchless spectacle,

"New, and yet as old  
As the foundations of the heavens and earth,"

an elaborate and pompous sunset hanging over the mountains of North Wales. The clouds passed slowly

through several arrangements, and in the last of these I read the very scene which six months before I had read in a most exquisite poem of Wordsworth's, extracted entire into a London newspaper (I think the "St. James's Chronicle.") It was a Canadian lake, —

" With all its fairy crowds  
Of islands that together lie  
As quietly as spots of sky  
Amongst the evening clouds."

The scene in the poem ("Ruth") that been originally mimicked by the poet from the sky, was here re-mimicked and rehearsed to the life, as it seemed, by the sky from the poet. Was I then, in July, 1802, really quoting from Wordsworth? Yes, reader; and I only in all Europe. In 1799, I had become acquainted with "We are Seven" at Bath. In the winter of 1801-2, I had read the whole of "Ruth;" early in 1803, I had written to Wordsworth. In May of 1803, I had received a very long answer from Wordsworth.

The next morning after reaching Chester, my first thought on rising was directed to the vexatious letter in my custody. The odious responsibility, thrust upon me in connection with this letter, was now becoming every hour more irritating, because every hour more embarrassing to the freedom of my own movements, since it must by this time have drawn the post-office into the ranks of my pursuers. Indignant I was that this letter should have the power of making myself an accomplice in causing anxiety, perhaps even calamity, to the poor emigrant — a man doubly liable to unjust suspicion; first, as by his profession presumably poor; and, secondly, as an alien. Indignant I was that this most filthy

of letters should also have the power of forcing me into all sorts of indirect and cowardly movements at inns ; for beyond all things it seemed to me important that I should not be arrested, or even for a moment challenged, as the wrongful holder of an important letter, before I had testified, by my own spontaneous transfer of it, that I had not dallied with any idea of converting it to my own benefit. In some way I must contrive to restore the letter. But was it not then the simplest of all courses, to take my hat before sitting down to breakfast, present myself at the post-office, tender my explanation, and then (like Christian in Bunyan's allegory) to lay down my soul-wearrying burden at the feet of those who could sign my certificate of absolution? Was not *that* simple? Was not *that* easy? Oh yes, beyond a doubt. And if a favorite fawn should be carried off by a lion, would it not be a very simple and easy course to walk after the robber, follow him into his den, and reason with the wretch on the indelicacy of his conduct? In my particular circumstances, the post-office was in relation to myself simply a lion's den. Two separate parties, I felt satisfied, must by this time be in chase of me ; and the two chasers would be confluent at the post-office. Beyond all other objects which I had to keep in view, paramount was that of fencing against my own re-capture. Anxious I was on behalf of the poor foreigner ; but it did not strike me that to this anxiety I was bound to sacrifice myself. Now, if I went to the post-office, I felt sure that nothing else would be the result ; and afterwards it turned out that in this anticipation I had been right. For it struck me that the nature of the inclosure in the French letter —

viz., the fact that without a forgery it was not negotiable — could not be known certainly to anybody but myself. Doubts upon that point must have quickened the anxieties of all connected with myself, or connected with the case. More urgent consequently would have been the applications of “Monsieur Monsieur” to the post-office; and consequently of the post-office to the Priory; and consequently more easily suggested and concerted between the post-office and the Priory would be all the arrangements for stopping me, in the event of my taking the route of Chester — in which case it was natural to suppose that I might *personally* return the letter to the official authorities. Of course none of these measures was certainly known to myself; but I guessed at them as reasonable probabilities; and it was evident that the fifty and odd hours since my elopement from Manchester had allowed ample time for concerting all the requisite preparations. As a last resource, in default of any better occurring, it is likely enough that my anxiety would have tempted me into this mode of surrendering my abominable trust, which by this time I regarded with such eyes of burning malice as Sinbad must have directed at intervals towards the venerable ruffian that sat astride upon his shoulders. But things had not yet come to Sinbad’s state of desperation; so immediately after breakfast I took my hat, determining to review the case and adopt some final decision in the open air. For I have always found it easier to think over a matter of perplexity whilst walking in wide open spaces under the broad eye of the natural heavens, than whilst shut up in a room. But at the very door of the **no** I was suddenly brought to a pause by the recollection



tion that some of the servants from the Priory were sure on every forenoon to be at times in the streets. The streets, however, could be evaded by shaping a course along the city walls; which I did, and descended into some obscure lane that brought me gradually to the banks of the river Dec. In the infancy of its course amongst the Denbighshire mountains, this river (famous in our pre-Norman history for the earliest parade\* of English monarchy) is wild and picturesque; and even below my mother's Priory wears a character of interest. But, a mile or so nearer to its mouth, when leaving Chester for Parkgate, it becomes miserably tame; and the several reaches of the river take the appearance of formal canals. On the right bank † of the river runs an artificial mound, called the Cop. It was, I believe, originally a Danish work; and certainly its name is Danish (*i. e.*, Icelandic, or old Danish), and the same from which is derived our architectural word *coping*. Upon

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\* "*Earliest parade:*" — It was a very scenical parade, for somewhere along this reach of the Dec — *viz.*, immediately below St. John's Priory — Edgar, the first sovereign of all England, was rowed by nine vassal *reguli*.

† "*Right bank:*" — But which bank *is* right, and which left, under circumstances of position varying by possibility without end? This is a reasonable demur; but yet it argues an inexperienced reader. For always the position of the spectator is conventionally fixed. In military tactics, in philosophic geography, in history, &c., the uniform assumption is, that you are standing with your back to the source of the river, and your eyes travelling along with its current. That bank of the river which under these circumstances lies upon your right, is the right bank *absolutely*, and not *relatively* only (as would be the case if a room, and not a river, were concerned). Hence it follows that the Middlesex side of the Thames is always the left bank, and the Surrey side always the right bank, no matter whether you are moving from London to Oxford, or reversely from Oxford to London.

this bank I was walking, and throwing my gaze along the formal vista presented by the river. Some trifle of anxiety might mingle with this gaze at the first, lest perhaps Philistines might be abroad; for it was just possible that I had been watched. But I have generally found that, if you are in quest of some certain escape from Philistines of whatsoever class — sheriff-officers, bores, no matter what — the surest refuge is to be found amongst hedgerows and fields, amongst cows and sheep: in fact, cows are amongst the gentlest of breathing creatures; none show more passionate tenderness to their young, when deprived of them; and, in short, I am not ashamed to profess a deep love for these quiet creatures. On the present occasion, there were many cows grazing in the fields below the Cop: but all along the Cop itself, I could descry no person whatever answering to the idea of a Philistine: in fact, there was nobody at all, except one woman, apparently middle-aged (meaning by *that* from thirty-five to forty-five), neatly dressed, though perhaps in rustic fashion, and by no possibility belonging to any class of my enemies; for already I was near enough to see so much. This woman might be a quarter-of-a-mile distant; and was steadily advancing towards me — face to face. Soon, therefore, I was beginning to read the character of her features pretty distinctly; and her countenance naturally served as a mirror to echo and reverberate my own feelings, consequently my own horror (horror without exaggeration it was), at a sudden uproar of tumultuous sounds rising clamorously ahead. *Ahead* I mean in relation to myself, but to *her* the sound was from the rear. Our situation was briefly this. Nearly half-a-mile be

hind the station of the woman, that reach of the river along which we two were moving came to an abrupt close; so that the next reach, making nearly a right-angled turn, lay entirely out of view. From this unseen reach it was that the angry clamor, so passionate and so mysterious, arose: and I, for *my* part, having never heard such a fierce battling outcry, nor even heard *of* such a cry, either in books or on the stage, in prose or verse, could not so much as whisper a guess to myself upon its probable cause. Only this I felt, that blind, unorganized nature it must be — and nothing in human or in brutal wrath — that could utter itself by such an anarchy of sea-like uproars. What was it? Where was it? Whence was it? Earthquake was it? convulsion of the steadfast earth? or was it the breaking loose from ancient chains of some deep morass like that of Solway? More probable it seemed, that the *ἀὶὼ ποταμῶν* of Euripides (the flowing backwards of rivers to their fountains) now, at last, after ages of expectation, had been suddenly realized. Not long I needed to speculate; for within half-a-minute, perhaps, from the first arrest of our attention, the proximate cause of this mystery declared itself to our eyes, although the remote cause (the hidden cause of that visible cause) was still as dark as before. Round that right-angled turn which I have mentioned as wheeling into the next succeeding reach of the river, suddenly as with the trampling of cavalry — but all dressing accurately — and the water at the outer angle sweeping so much faster than that at the inner angle, as to keep the front of advance rigorously in line, violently careered round **into our own placid watery vista a huge charging block**

of waters, filling the whole channel of the river, and coming down upon us at the rate of forty miles an hour. Well was it for us, myself and that respectable rustic woman, us the Deucalion and Pyrrha of this perilous moment, sole survivors apparently of the deluge (since by accident there was at that particular moment on that particular Cop nothing else to survive), that by means of this Cop, and of ancient Danish lands (possibly not yet paid for their work), we *could* survive. In fact, this watery breastwork, a perpendicular wall of water carrying itself as true as if controlled by a mason's plumb-line, rode forward at such a pace, that obviously the fleetest horse or dromedary would have had no chance of escape. Many a decent railway even, among railways since born its rivals, would not have had above the third of a chance. Naturally, I had too short a time for observing much or accurately; and universally I am a poor hand at observing; else I should say, that this riding block of crystal waters did not gallop, but went at a long trot; yes, long trot — that most frightful of paces in a tiger, in a buffalo, or in a rebellion of waters. Even a ghost, I feel convinced, would appall me more if coming up at a long diabolical trot, than at a canter or gallop. The first impulse to both of us was derived from cowardice; cowardice the most abject and selfish. Such is man, though a Deucalion elect; such is woman, though a decent Pyrrha. Both of us ran like hares; neither did I, Deucalion, think of poor Pyrrha at all for the first sixty seconds. Yet, on the other hand why *should* I? It struck me seriously that St. George's Channel (and if so, beyond a doubt, the Atlantic Ocean) had broke loose, and was, doubtless, playing the same

insufferable gambols upon all rivers along a seaboard of six to seven thousand miles ; in which case, as all the race of woman must be doomed, how romantic a speculation it was for me, sole relic of literature, to think specially of one poor Pyrrha, probably very illiterate, whom I had never yet spoken to. That idea pulled me up. *Not spoken to her ?* Then I *would* speak to her ; and the more so, because the sound of the pursuing river told me that flight was useless. And, besides, if any reporter or sub-editor of some Chester chronicle should, at this moment, with his glass be sweeping the Cop, and discover me flying under these unchivalrous circumstances, he might gibbet me to all eternity. Halting, therefore (and really I had not run above eighty or a hundred steps), I waited for my solitary co-tenant of the Cop. She was a little blown by running, and could not easily speak ; besides which, at the very moment of her coming up, the preternatural column of waters, running in the very opposite direction to the natural current of the river, came up with us, ran by with the ferocious uproar of a hurricane, sent up the sides of the Cop a salute of waters, as if hypocritically pretending to kiss our feet, but secretly understood by all parties as a vain treachery for pulling us down into the flying deluge ; whilst all along both banks the mighty reflux wash was heard as it rode along, leaving memorials, by sight and by sound, of its victorious power. But my female associate in this terrific drama, what said she, on coming up with me ? Or what said I ? For, by accident, I it was that spoke first ; notwithstanding the fact, notorious and undeniable, that *I had never been introduced to her*. Here, however, be it understood, as a case now solemnly

adjudicated and set at rest, that in the midst of any great natural convulsion — earthquake, suppose, water-spout, tornado, or eruption of Vesuvius — it shall and may be lawful in all time coming (any usage or tradition to the contrary notwithstanding), for two English people to communicate with each other, although, by affidavit made before two justices of the peace, it shall have been proved that no previous introduction had been possible; in all other cases the old statute of non-intercourse holds good. Meantime, the present case, in default of more circumstantial evidence, might be regarded, if not as an earthquake, yet as ranking amongst the first fruits or blossoms of an earthquake. So I spoke without scruple. All my freezing English reserve gave way under this boiling sense of having been so recently running for life: and then again, suppose the water column should come back — riding *along with* the current, and no longer riding *against* it — in that case, we and all the country Palatine might soon have to run for our lives. Under such threatenings of common peril, surely the *παρρησία*, or unlimited license of speech, ought spontaneously to proclaim itself without waiting for sanction.

So I asked her the meaning of this horrible tumult in the waters; how did she read the mystery? Her answer was, that though she had never before seen such a thing, yet from her grandmother she had often heard of it; and, if she had run before it, *that* was because *I* ran; and a little, perhaps, because the noise frightened her. What was it, then? I asked. “It was,” she said, “the *Bore*; and it was an affection to which only some few rivers here and there were liable; and the Dee was one

of these." So ignorant was I, that, until that moment, I had never heard of such a nervous affection in rivers. Subsequently I found that, amongst English rivers, the neighboring river Severn, a far more important stream, suffered at spring tides the same kind of hysterics, and, perhaps, some few other rivers in this British island; but amongst Indian rivers, only the Ganges.

At last, when the *Bore* had been discussed to the full extent of our united ignorance, I went off to the subject of that other curse, far more afflicting than any conceivable bore — viz., the foreign letter in my pocket. The *Bore* had certainly alarmed us for ninety or a hundred seconds, but the letter would poison my very existence, like the bottle-imp, until I could transfer it to some person truly qualified to receive it. Might not my fair friend on the Cop be marked out by Fate as "the coming woman" born to deliver me from this pocket curse? It is true that she displayed a rustic simplicity somewhat resembling that of Audrey in "As you like it." *Her*, in fact, not at all more than Audrey, had the gods been pleased to make "poetical." But, for my particular mission, *that* might be amongst her best qualifications. At any rate, I was wearied in spirit under my load of responsibility; personally to liberate myself by visiting the post-office, too surely I felt as the ruin of my enterprise in its very outset. Some agent *must* be employed; and where could one be found promising by looks, words, manners, more trustworthiness than this agent, sent by accident? The case almost explained itself. She readily understood how the resemblance of a name had thrown the letter into my possession; and that the simple remedy was — to restore it to the right owner



through the right channel, which channel was the never-enough-to-be-esteemed General Post-office, at that time pitching its tents and bivouacking nightly in Lombard Street, but for this special case legally represented by the Chester head-office, a service of no risk to *her*, for which, on the contrary, all parties would thank her. I, to begin, begged to put *my* thanks into the shape of half-a-crown; but, as some natural doubts arose with respect to her precise station in life (for she might be a farmer's wife, and not a servant), I thought it advisable to postulate the existence of some youthful daughter; to which mythological person I begged to address my offering, when incarnated in the shape of a doll.

I therefore, Deucalion that was or had been provisionally through a brief interval of panic, took leave of my Pyrrha, sole partuer in the perils and anxieties of that astounding Bore, dismissing her — Thessalian Pyrrha — not to any Thessalian vales of Tempe, but — O ye powers of moral anachronism! to the Chester Post-office; and warning her on no account to be prematurely wheedled out of her secret. Her position, diplomatically speaking, was better (as I made her understand) than that of the post-office; she having something in her gift — viz., an appointment to forty guineas; whereas in the counter-gift of the proud post-office was nothing; neither for instant fruition nor in far off reversion. Her, in fact, one might regard as a Pandora, carrying a box with something better than hope at the bottom; for hope too often betrays, but a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith, which never betrays, and for a sum which, on the authority of Goldsmith, makes an English clergyman “passing rich” through a whole

twelvemonth, entitled her to look scornfully upon every second person that she met.

In about two hours the partner of my solitary kingdom upon the Cop reappeared, with the welcome assurance that Chester had survived the Bore, that all was right, and that anything which ever *had* been looking crooked was now made straight as the path of an arrow. She had given "my love" (so she said) to the post-office; had been thanked by more than either one or two amongst the men of letters who figured in the equipage of that establishment; and had been assured that, long before daylight departed, one large cornucopia of justice and felicity would be emptied out upon the heads of all parties in the drama. I myself, not the least afflicted person on the roll, was already released — suddenly released, and fully — from the iniquitous load of responsibility thrust upon me; the poor emigrant was released from his conflict with fears that were uncertain, and creditors too certain; the post-office was released from the scandal and embarrassment of a gross irregularity, that might eventually have brought the postmaster-general down upon their haunches; and the household at the Priory were released from all anxieties, great and small, sound and visionary, on the question of my fancied felony.

In those anxieties, one person there was that never had condescended to participate. This was my eldest sister, Mary — just eleven months senior to myself. She was among the gentlest of girls, and yet from the very first she had testified the most incredulous disdain of all who fancied *her* brother capable of any thought so base as that of meditating a wrong to a needy exile. At

present, after exchanging a few parting words, and a few final or farewell farewells with my faithful female\* agent, further business I had none to detain me in Chester, except what concerned this particular sister. My business with *her* was not to thank her for the resolute justice which she had done me, since as yet I could not know of that service, but simply to see her, to learn the domestic news of the Priory, and, according to the possibilities of the case, to concert with her some plan of regular correspondence. Meantime it happened that a maternal uncle, a military man on the Bengal establishment, who had come to England on a three years' leave of absence (according to the custom in those days), was at this time a visitor at the Priory. My mother's establishment of servants was usually limited to five persons — all, except one, elderly and torpid. But my uncle, who had brought to England some beautiful Arab and Persian horses, found it necessary to gather about his stables an extra body of men and boys. These were all alert and active; so that, when I reconnoitred the windows of the Priory in the dusk, hoping in some way to attract my sister's attention, I not only failed in that object, seeing no lights in any room which could naturally have been occupied by her, but I also found myself growing into an object of special attention to certain unknown servants, who, having no doubt received instruc-

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\* Some people are irritated, or even fancy themselves insulted, by overt acts of alliteration, as many people are by puns. On their account let me say, that, although there are here eight separate f's in less than half a sentence, this is to be held as pure accident. In fact, at one time there were nine f's in the original cast of the sentence, until I, in pity of the affronted people, substituted *female agent for female friend*.

tions to look out for me, easily inferred from my anxious movements that I must be the person "wanted." Uneasy at all the novel appearances of things, I went away, and returned, after an hour's interval, armed with a note to my sister, requesting her to watch for an opportunity of coming out for a few minutes under the shadows of the little ruins in the Priory garden,\* where

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\* "*The little ruins in the Priory garden:*" — St. John's Priory had been part of the monastic foundation attached to the very ancient church of St. John, standing beyond the walls of Chester. Early in the seventeenth century, this Priory, or so much of it as remained, was occupied as a dwelling-house by Sir Robert Cotton the antiquary. And there, according to tradition, he had been visited by Ben Jonson. All that remained of the Priory when used as a domestic residence by Cotton was upon a miniature scale, except only the kitchen — a noble room, with a groined roof of stone, exactly as it had been fitted to the uses of the monastic establishment. The little hall of entrance, the dining-room, and principal bedroom, were in a modest style of elegance, fitted by the scale of accommodation for the abode of a literary bachelor, and pretty nearly as Cotton had left them two centuries before. But the miniature character of the Priory, which had dwindled by successive abridgments from a royal quarto into a pretty duodecimo, was seen chiefly in the beautiful ruins which adorned the little lawn, across which access was gained to the house through the hall. These ruins amounted at the most to three arches — which, because round and not pointed, were then usually called Saxon, as contradistinguished from Gothic. What might be the exact classification of the architecture I do not know. Certainly the very ancient church of St. John, to which at one time the Priory must have been an appendage, wore a character of harsh and naked simplicity that was repulsive. But the little ruins were really beautiful, and drew continual visits from artists and sketchers through every successive summer. Whether they had any architectural enrichments, I do not remember. But they interested all people — first by their miniature scale, which would have qualified them (if portable) for a direct introduction amongst the "properties" and *Dramatis personae* on our London opera boards; and, secondly, by the exquisite beauty of the shrubs, wild flowers, and ferns, that surmounted the arches with natu-

I meantime would be waiting. This note I gave to a stranger, whose costume showed him to be a groom, begging him to give it to the young lady whose address it bore. He answered, in a respectful tone, that he would do so; but he could not sincerely have meant it, since (as I soon learned) it was impossible. In fact, not one minute had I waited, when in glided amongst the ruins — not my fair sister, but my bronzed Bengal uncle! A Bengal tiger would not more have startled me. Now, to a dead certainty, I said, here comes a fatal barrier to the prosecution of my scheme. I was mistaken. Between my mother and my uncle there existed the very deepest affection; for they regarded each other as sole relics of a household once living together in memorable harmony. But in many features of character no human beings could stand off from each other in more lively repulsion. And this was seen on the present occasion. My dear excellent mother, from the eternal quiet of her decorous household, looked upon every violent or irregular movement, and therefore upon mine at present, much as she would have done upon the opening of the seventh seal in the Revelations. But my uncle was thoroughly a man of the world, and what told ever more powerfully on my behalf in this instance, he

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At coronets of the richest composition. In this condition of attractiveness my mother saw this little Priory, which was then on sale. As a residence, it had the great advantage of standing somewhat aloof from the city of Chester, which however (like all cathedral cities), was quiet and respectable in the composition of its population. My mother bought it, added a drawing-room, eight or nine bedrooms, dressing-rooms, etc., all on the miniature scale corresponding to the original plan: and thus formed a very pretty residence, with the grace of monastic antiquity hanging over the whole little retreat.

was a man of even morbid activity. It was so exquisitely natural in his eyes that any rational person should prefer moving about amongst the breezy mountains of Wales, to a slavish routine of study amongst books grim with dust, and masters too probably still more dusty, that he seemed disposed to regard my conduct as an extraordinary act of virtue. On his advice, it was decided that there could be no hope in any contest with my main wishes, and that I should be left to pursue my original purpose of walking amongst the Welsh mountains ; provided I chose to do so upon the slender allowance of a guinea a week. My uncle, whose Indian munificence ran riot upon all occasions, would gladly have had a far larger allowance made to me, and would himself have clandestinely given me anything I asked. But I myself, from general ignorance (in which accomplishment I excelled), judged this to be sufficient ; and at this point my mother, hitherto passively acquiescent in my uncle's proposals, interfered with a decisive rigor that in my own heart I could not disapprove. Any larger allowance, most reasonably she urged, what was it but to "make proclamation to my two younger brothers that rebellion bore a premium, and that mutiny was the ready road to ease and comfort?" My conscience smote me at these words : I felt something like an electric shock on this sudden reference, so utterly unexpected, to my brothers ; for, to say the truth, I had never once admitted them to my thoughts in forecasting the eventual consequences that might possibly unroll themselves from my own headstrong act. Here now, within three days, rang like a solemn knell, reverberating from the scounding-board within my awakened con-

science, one of those many self-reproaches so dimly masked, but not circumstantially prefigured, by the secret thought under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral about its dread Whispering Gallery. In this particular instance, I know that the evil consequences from my own example never did take effect. But at the moment of my mother's sorrowful suggestion, the fear that they *might* take effect thrilled me with remorse. My next brother, a boy of generous and heroic temper, was at a school governed by a brutal and savage master. This brother, I well know, had justifying reasons, ten times weightier than any which I could plead, for copying my precedent. Most probable it was that he would do so; but I learned many years subsequently from himself that in fact he did not: The man's diabolical malice at last made further toleration impossible. Without thinking of my example, under very different circumstances my brother won his own emancipation in ways suggested by his own views and limited by his own resources; he got afloat upon the wide, wide world of ocean; ran along a perilous seven-years' career of nautical romance; had his name almost blotted out from all memories in England; became of necessity a pirate amongst pirates; was liable to the death of a pirate wherever taken; then suddenly, on a morning of battle, having effected his escape from the bloody flag, he joined the English storming party at Monte Video, fought under the eye of Sir Home Popham, the commodore, and within twenty-four hours after the victory was rated as a midshipman on board the *Diadem* (a 64-gun ship), which bore Sir Home's flag. All this I have more circumstantially narrated elsewhere. I repeat the sum of it here, as



showing that his elopement from a brutal tyrant was not due to any misleading of mine. I happen to know this now — but then I could not know it. And if I had so entirely overlooked one such possible result, full of calamity to my youthful brothers, why might I not have overlooked many hundreds beside, equally probable — equally full of peril? That consideration saddened me, and deepened more and more the ominous suggestion — the oracle full of woe — that spoke from those Belshazzar thunderings upon the wall of the Whispering Gallery. In fact, every intricate and untried path in life, where it was from the first a matter of arbitrary choice to enter upon it or avoid it, is effectually a path through a vast Hercynian forest, unexplored and unmapped, where each several turn in your advance leaves you open to new anticipations of what is next to be expected, and consequently open to altered valuations of all that has been already traversed. Even the character of your own absolute experience, past and gone, which (if anything in this world) you might surely answer for as sealed and settled forever — even this you must submit to hold in suspense, as a thing conditional and contingent upon what is yet to come — liable to have its provisional character affirmed or reversed, according to the new combinations into which it may enter with elements only yet perhaps in the earliest stages of development.

Saddened by these reflections, I was still more saddened by the chilling manner of my mother. If I could presume to descry a fault in my mother, it was — that she turned the chilling aspects of her high-toned character too exclusively upon those whom, in any degree, she knew or supposed to be promoters of evil. Sometimes

her austerity might seem even unjust. But at present the whole artillery of her displeasure seemed to be unmasked, and *justly* unmasked, against a moral aberration, that offered for itself no excuse that was obvious in one moment, that was legible at one glance, that could utter itself in one word. My mother was predisposed to think ill of all causes that required many words: I, predisposed to subtleties of all sorts and degrees, had naturally become acquainted with cases that could not unrobe their apparellings down to that degree of simplicity. If in this world there is one misery having no relief, it is the pressure on the heart from the *Incommunicable*. And if another Sphinx should arise to propose another enigma to man — saying, What burden is that which only is insupportable by human fortitude? I should answer at once — *It is the burden of the Incommunicable*. At this moment, sitting in the same room of the Priory with my mother, knowing how reasonable she was — how patient of explanations — how candid — how open to pity — not the less I sank away in a hopelessness that was immeasurable from all effort at explanation. She and I were contemplating the very same act; but she from one centre, I from another. Certain I was, that if through one half-minute she could realize in one deadly experience the suffering with which I had fought through more than three months, the amount of physical anguish, the desolation of all genial life, she would have uttered a rapturous absolution of that which else must always seem to her a mere explosion of wilful insubordination. “In this brief experience,” she would exclaim, “I read the record of your acquittal; in this fiery torment I acknowledge the

gladiatorial resistance." Such in the case supposed would have been her revised verdict. But this case was exquisitely impossible. Nothing which offered itself to my rhetoric gave any but the feeblest and most childish reflection of my past sufferings. Just so helpless did I feel, disarmed into just the same languishing impotence to face (or make an effort at facing) the difficulty before me, as most of us have felt in the dreams of our childhood when lying down without a struggle before some all-conquering lion. I felt that the situation was one without hope; a solitary word, which I attempted to mould upon my lips, died away into a sigh; and passively I acquiesced in the apparent confession spread through all the appearances — that in reality I had no palliation to produce.

One alternative, in the offer made to me, was, that I had permission to stay at the Priory. The Priory or the mountainous region of Wales, was offered freely to my choice. Either of the two offered an attractive abode. The Priory, it may be fancied, was clogged with the liability to fresh and intermitting reproaches. But this was not so. I knew my mother sufficiently to be assured that, once having expressed her sorrowful condemnation of my act, having made it impossible for me to misunderstand her views, she was ready to extend her wonted hospitality to me, and (as regarded all practical matters) her wonted kindness; but not that sort of kindness which could make me forget that I stood under the deepest shadows of her displeasure, or could leave me for a moment free to converse at my ease upon any and every subject. A man that is talking on simple toleration, and, as it were, under permanent protest, can-

not feel himself morally at his ease, unless very obtuse and coarse in his sensibilities.

Mine under any situation approaching to the present, were so far from being obtuse, that they were morbidly and extravagantly acute. I had erred: that I knew, and did not disguise from myself. Indeed, the rapture of anguish with which I had recurred involuntarily to my experience of the Whispering Gallery, and the symbolic meaning which I had given to that experience, manifested indirectly my deep sense of error through the dim misgiving which attended it — that in some mysterious way the sense and the consequences of this error would magnify themselves at every stage of life, in proportion as they were viewed retrospectively from greater and greater distances. I had, besides, through the casual allusion to my brothers, suddenly become painfully aware of another and separate failure in the filial obligations resting on myself. Any mother, who is a widow, has especial claims on the coöperation of her eldest son in all means of giving a beneficial bias to the thoughts and purposes of the younger children: and, if *any* mother, then by a title how special could my own mother invoke such coöperation, who had on *her* part satisfied all the claims made upon her maternal character, by self-sacrifices as varied as privately I knew them to be exemplary. Whilst yet comparatively young, not more than thirty-six, she had sternly refused all countenance, on at least two separate occasions, to distinguished proposals of marriage, out of pure regard to the memory of my father, and to the interests of his children. Could I fail to read, in such unostentatious exemplifications of maternal goodness, a summons to a

corresponding earnestness on my part in lightening, as much as possible, the burden of her responsibilities? Alas! too certainly, as regarded *that* duty, I felt my own failure: one opportunity had been signally lost, and yet, on the other hand, I also felt that more might be pleaded on my behalf than could by possibility be apparent to a neutral bystander. But this, to be pleaded effectually, needed to be said — not by myself, but by a disinterested advocate: and no such advocate was at hand. In blind distress of mind, conscience-stricken and heart-stricken, I stretched out my arms, seeking for my one sole auxiliary; that was my eldest sister Mary; for my younger sister Jane was a mere infant. Blindly and mechanically, I stretched out my arms as if to arrest her attention; and giving utterance to my laboring thoughts, I was beginning to speak, when all at once I became sensible that Mary was not there. I had heard a step behind me, and supposed it hers: since the groon's ready acceptance of my letter to her had pre-occupied me with the belief that I should see her in a few moments. But she was far away, on a mission of anxious, sisterly love. Immediately after my elopement, an express had been sent off to the Priory from Manchester; this express, well mounted, had not spent more than four hours on the road. He must have passed me on my first day's walk; and, within an hour after *his* arrival, came a communication from the post-office, explaining the nature and value of the letter that had been so vexatiously thrust into my hands. Alarm spread through the Priory: for it must be confessed that the coincidence of my elopement with this certified delivery of the letter to myself, gave but too reasonable grounds for connect-

ing the two incidents. I was grateful to dear Mary for resisting such strong plausibilities against me ; and yet I could not feel entitled to complain of those who had *not* resisted. The probability seemed that I must have violated the laws to some extent, either by forgery or by fraudulent appropriation. In either case, the most eligible course seemed to be my instant expatriation. France (this being the year of peace) or Holland would offer the best asylum until the affair should be settled ; and, as there could be no anxieties in any quarter as to the main thing concerned in the issue — viz., the money — in any case there was no reason to fear a vindictive pursuit, even on the worst assumption as regarded the offence. An elderly gentleman, long connected with the family, and in many cases an agent for the guardians, at this moment offered his services as counsellor and protector to my sister Mary. Two hours therefore from the arrival of the Manchester express (who, starting about 11 A. M., had reached Chester at 3 P. M.), all the requisite steps having been concerted with one of the Chester banks for getting letters of credit, etc., a carriage-and-four was at the Priory gate, into which stepped my sister Mary, with one female attendant and her friendly escort. And thus, the same day on which I had made my exit from Mr. Lawson's saw the chase after me commencing. Sunset saw the pursuers crossing the Mersey, and trotting into Liverpool. Thence to Ormskirk, thirteen miles, and thence to *proud Preston*, about twenty more. Within a trifle, these three stages make fifty miles ; and so much did my chasers, that pursued when no man fled, accomplish before sleeping. On the next day, long and long before the time when I,

in my humble pedestrian character, reached Chester. my sister's party had reached Ambleside — distant about ninety two miles from Liverpool. consequently somewhere about a hundred and seven miles from the Priory. This chasing party, with good reason, supposed themselves to be on my traces ever after reaching "proud Preston." which is the point of confluence for the Liverpool and Manchester roads northwards. For I myself, having originally planned my route for the English lakes, purposely suffered some indications of that plan to remain behind me, in the hope of thus giving a false direction to any pursuit that might be attempted.

The further course of this chase was disagreeably made known to me about four years later, on attaining my majority, by a "little account" of about £150 against my little patrimonial fortune. Of all the letters from the Priory (which, however, from natural oversight were not thought of until the day after my own arrival at the Priory — *i. e.*, the third day after my sister's departure), not one caught them: which was unfortunate. For the journey to and from the lakes, together with a circuit of more than one hundred and fifty miles amongst the lakes, would at any rate have run up to nearly four hundred miles. But it happened that my pursuers not having time to sift such intelligence as they received, were misled into an excursus of full two hundred miles more, by chasing an imaginary "*me*" to the caves, thence to Bolton Abbey, thence nearly to York. Altogether, the journey amounted to above six hundred miles, all performed with four horses. Now at that time the cost of four horses — which in the cheapest hay and corn



seasons was three shillings a mile, and in dear seasons four — was three and sixpence a mile: to which it was usual to compute an average addition of one shilling a mile for gates, positions, leaders: so that the total amount, with the natural expenses of the three travellers at the inn, ran up to five shillings a mile. Consequently, five shillings being a quarter of the pound, six hundred miles cost the quarter of £600. The only item in this long account which consisted not to the amount of a solitary smile for all this money thrown away, was an item in a bill at Patterdale (head of Ullswater) —

To 2s echo, first quality	...	...	...	20 0 0
To do., second quality	...	...	...	4 2 0

It seems the price of echoes varied, reasonably enough, with the amount of gunpowder consumed. But at Low-wood, on Windermere, half-crown echoes might be had by those base snobs who would put up with a vile Brummagem substitute for "the genuine article."

Trivial, meantime, as regarded any permanent consequences, would have been this casual larceny upon my patrimony. Had I waited until my sister returned home, which I might have been sure could only have been delayed through the imperfectly concerted system of correspondence, all would have prospered. From her I should have received the cordiality and the genial sympathy which I needed: I could have quietly pursued my studies: and my Oxford matriculation would have followed as a matter of course. But unluckily, having for so long a time been seriously shaken in health, any interruption of my wild open-air system of life instantly threw me back into nervous derangements. Past all doubt it had now become that the *à fresco* life, to which I had

looked with so much hopefulness for a sure and rapid restoration to health, was even more potent than I had supposed it. Literally irresistible it seemed in reorganizing the system of my languishing powers. Impatient, therefore, under the absence of my sister, and agitated every hour so long as my home wanted its central charm in some household countenance, some *συτροφον ορμα*, beaming with perfect sympathy, I resolved to avail myself of those wild mountainous and sylvan attractions which at present lay nearest to me. Those parts, indeed, of Flintshire, or even of Denbighshire, which lay near to Chester, were not in any very eminent sense attractive. The vale of Gressford, for instance, within the Flintshire border, and yet not more than seven miles distant, offered a lovely little seclusion; and to this I had a privileged access; and at first I tried it; but it was a dressed and ornamented pleasure-ground; and two ladies of some distinction, nearly related to each other, and old friends of my mother, were in a manner the ladies paramount within the ring fence of this Arcadian vale. But this did not offer what I wanted. Everything was elegant, polished, quiet, throughout the lawns and groves of this verdant retreat: no rudeness was allowed here; even the little brooks were trained to "behave themselves;" and the two villas of the reigning ladies (Mrs. Warrington and Mrs. Parry) showed the perfection of good taste. For both ladies had cultivated a taste for painting, and I believe some executive power. Here my introductions were rather too favorable; since they forced me into society. From Gressford, however, the character of the scene, considered as a daily residence, very soon repelled me, however otherwise fascinating by

the accomplishments of its two possessors. Just two-and-twenty miles from Chester, meantime, lay a far grander scene, the fine vale of Llangollen in the centre of Denbighshire. Here, also, the presiding residents were two ladies, whose romantic retirement from the world at an early age had attracted for many years a general interest to their persons, habits, and opinions. These ladies were Irish—Miss Ponsonby, and Lady Eleanor Butler, a sister of Lord Ormond. I had twice been formally presented to them by persons of rank to stamp a value upon this introduction. But naturally, though high-bred courtesy concealed any such open expressions of feeling, they must have felt a very slight interest in myself or my opinions.\* I grieve to say that my own feelings were not more ardent towards *them*. Nevertheless, I presented myself at their cottage as often as I passed through Llangollen; and was always courteously received when they happened to be in the country. However, as it was not ladies that I was seeking in Wales, I now pushed on to Carnarvonshire; and for some weeks

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\* It is worthy of notice that, when I, in this year 1802, and again in after years, endeavored to impress them favorably with regard to Wordsworth as a poet (that subject having not been introduced by myself, but by one of the ladies, who happened to have a Cambridge friend intimate with the man, and perhaps with his works), neither of them was disposed to look with any interest or hopefulness upon his pretensions. But, at a period long subsequent to this, when the House of Commons had rung with applause on Sergeant Talfourd's mention of his name, and when all American tourists of any distinction flocked annually to Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's own poems bear witness that a great revolution had been worked at Llangollen. I mention this anecdote, because I have good reason to think that a large proportion of the "conversions" in the case of Wordsworth took place under the same influence.

took a very miniature suite of rooms — viz., one room and a closet — at Bangor.

FROM WALES TO LONDON.<sup>41</sup>

THERE were already, even in those days of 1802, numerous inns, erected at reasonable distances from each other, for the accommodation of tourists: and no sort of disgrace attached in Wales, as too generally upon the great roads of England, to the pedestrian style of travelling. Indeed, the majority of those whom I met as fellow-tourists in the quiet little cottage-parlors of the Welsh posting-houses were pedestrian travellers. All the way from Shrewsbury through Llangollen, Llanrwst,\* Conway, Bangor, then turning to the left at right angles through Carnarvon, and so on to Dolgelly (the chief town of Merionethshire), Tan-y-Bwlch, Harlech, Barmouth, and through the sweet solitudes of Cardiganshire, or turning back sharply towards the English border through the gorgeous wood scenery of Montgomeryshire — everywhere at intermitting distances of twelve to sixteen miles, I found the most comfortable inns. One feature indeed of repose in all this chain of solitary resting-houses — viz., the fact that none of them rose above two stories in height — was due to the modest scale on which the travelling system of the Principality had moulded itself in correspondence to the calls of England, which then (but be it remembered this *then* was in 1802, a year of peace) threw a very small proportion of her vast migratory population annually into this sequestered

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\* “*Llanrwst* :” — This is an alarming word for the eye ; one vowel to what the English eye counts as seven consonants : but it is easily pronounced as *Tlanroost*.

channel. No huge Babylonian centres of commerce towered into the clouds on these sweet sylvan routes: no hurricanes of haste, or fever-stricken armies of horses and flying chariots, tormented the echoes in these mountain recesses. And it has often struck me that a world-wearied man, who sought for the peace of monasteries separated from their gloomy captivity, — peace and silence such as theirs combined with the large liberty of nature, — could not do better than revolve amongst these modest inns in the five northern Welsh counties of Denbigh, Montgomery, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Cardigan. Sleeping, for instance, and breakfasting at Carnarvon; then, by an easy nine-mile walk, going forwards to dinner at Bangor, thence to Aber — nine miles; or to Llanberris; and so on forever, accomplishing seventy to ninety or one hundred miles in a week. This, upon actual experiment, and for week after week, I found the most delightful of lives. Here was the eternal motion of winds and rivers, or of the Wandering Jew liberated from the persecution which compelled him to move, and turned his breezy freedom into a killing captivity. Happier life I cannot imagine than this vagrancy, if the weather were but tolerable, through endless successions of changing beauty, and towards evening a courteous welcome in a pretty rustic home — that having all the luxuries of a fine hotel (in particular some luxuries \* that are almost sacred to Alpine regions), was at the same time liberated from the inevitable accompaniments of such hotels in great cities or at great travelling stations — viz., the tumult and uproar.

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\* But a luxury of another class, and quite peculiar to Wales, was in those days (I hope in these) the Welsh harp, in attendance at every **tan.**

Life on this model was but too delightful; and to myself especially, that am never thoroughly in health unless when having pedestrian exercise to the extent of fifteen miles at the most, and eight to ten miles at the least. Living thus, a man earned his daily enjoyment. But what did it cost? About half-a-guinea a-day: whilst my boyish allowance was not a third of this. The flagrant health, health boiling over in fiery rapture, which ran along, side by side, with exercise on this scale, whilst all the while from morning to night I was inhaling mountain air, soon passed into a hateful scourge. Perquisites to servants and a bed would have absorbed the whole of my weekly guinea. My policy therefore was, if the autumnal air were warm enough, to save this expense of a bed and the chambermaid by sleeping amongst ferns or furze upon a hillside; and perhaps with a cloak of sufficient *weight* as well as compass, or an Arab's burnoose, this would have been no great hardship. But then in the daytime what an oppressive burden to carry. So perhaps it was as well that I had no cloak at all. I did, however, for some weeks try the plan of carrying a canvas tent manufactured by myself, and not larger than an ordinary umbrella: but to pitch this securely I found difficult; and on windy nights it became a troublesome companion. As winter drew near, this bivouacking system became too dangerous to attempt. Still one may bivouac decently, barring rain and wind, up to the end of October. And I counted, on the whole, that in a fortnight I spent nine nights abroad. There are, as perhaps the reader knows by experience, no jaguars in Wales — nor pumas — nor anacondas — nor (generally speaking) any Thugs. What I feared most, but perhaps

only through ignorance of zoölogy, was, lest, whilst my sleeping face was upturned to the stars, some one of the many little Brahminical-looking cows on the Cambrian hills, one or other, might poach her foot into the centre of my face. I do not suppose any fixed hostility of that nature to English faces in Welsh cows: but everywhere I observe in the feminine mind something of beautiful caprice, a floral exuberance of that charming wilfulness which characterizes our dear human sisters I fear through all worlds. Against Thugs I had Juvenal's license to be careless in the emptiness of my pockets (*cantabit vacuus\* coram latrone viator*). But I fear that Juvenal's license will not always hold water. There are people bent upon cudgelling one who will persist in excusing one's having nothing but a bad shilling in one's purse, without reading in that Juvenalian *vacuitas* any privilege or license of exemption from the general fate of travellers that intrude upon the solitude of robbers.

Dr. Johnson, upon some occasion, which I have forgotten, is represented by his biographers as accounting for an undeserving person's success in these terms: "Why, I suppose that *his* nonsense suited *their* nonsense." Can *that* be the humiliating solution of my own colloquial success at this time in Carnarvonshire inns? Do not suggest such a thought, most courteous reader. No matter: won in whatsoever way, success *is* success;

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\* "*Vacuus*:" - I am afraid, though many a year has passed since last I read Juvenal, that the true classical sense of *vacuus* is, *careless, clear from all burden of anxiety*, so that *vacuitas* will be the *result of* immunity from robbery. But suffer me to understand it in the sense of *free from the burden of property*, in which sense *vacuitas* would be the *cause* of such an immunity.



and even nonsense, if it is to be victorious nonsense, — victorious over the fatal habit of yawning in those who listen, and in some cases over the habit of disputing, — must involve a deeper art or more effective secret of power than is easily attained. Nonsense, in fact, is a very difficult thing. Not every seventh son of a seventh son (to use Milton's words) is equal to the task of keeping and maintaining a company of decent men in orthodox nonsense for a matter of two hours. Come from what fountain it may, all talk that succeeds to the extent of raising a wish to meet the talker again, must contain *salt*; must be seasoned with some flavoring element pungent enough to neutralize the natural tendencies of all mixed conversation, not vigilantly tended, to lose itself in insipidities and platitudes. Above all things, I shunned, as I would shun a pestilence, Coleridge's capital error, which through life he practised, of keeping the audience in a state of passiveness. Unjust this was to others, but most of all to himself. This eternal stream of talk which never for one instant intermitted, and allowed no momentary opportunity of reaction to the persecuted and baited auditor, was absolute ruin to the interests of the talker himself. Always passive — always acted upon, never allowed to react, into what state did the poor afflicted listener — he that played the *rôle* of listener — collapse? He returned home in the exhausted condition of one that has been drawn up just before death from the bottom of a well occupied by foul gases; and, of course, hours before he had reached that perilous point of depression, he had lost all power of distinguishing, understanding, or connecting. I, for my part, without needing to think of the unamiable arro-

gance involved in such a habit, simply on principles of deadliest selfishness, should have avoided thus incapacitating my hearer from doing any justice to the rhetoric or the argument with which I might address him.

Some great advantages I had for colloquial purposes, and for engaging the attention of people wiser than myself. Ignorant I was in a degree past all imagination of daily life—even as it exists in England. But, on the other hand, having the advantage of a prodigious memory, and the far greater advantage of a logical instinct for feeling in a moment the secret analogies or parallelisms that connected things else apparently remote, I enjoyed these two peculiar gifts for conversation: first, an inexhaustible fertility of topics, and therefore of resources for illustrating or for varying any subject that chance or purpose suggested; secondly, a prematurely awakened sense of *art* applied to conversation. I had learned the use of vigilance in evading with civility the approach of wearisome discussions, and in impressing, quietly and oftentimes imperceptibly, a new movement upon dialogues that loitered painfully, or see-sawed unprofitably. That it was one function of art to hide and mask itself (*artis est artem celare*), this I well knew. Neither was there much art required. The chief demand was for new facts, or new views, or for views newly-colored impressing novelty upon old facts. To throw in a little of the mysterious every now and then was useful, even with those that by temperament were averse to the mysterious; pointed epigrammatic sayings and jests—even somewhat worn—were useful; a seasonable quotation in verse was always effective; and illustrative anecdotes diffused a grace over the whole movement of the dia-

logue. It would have been coxcombry to practise any elaborate or any conspicuous art : few and simple were any artifices that I ever employed ; but, being hidden and seasonable, they were often effective. And the whole result was, that I became exceedingly popular within my narrow circle of friends. This circle was necessarily a fluctuating one, since it was mainly composed of tourists that happened to linger for a few weeks in or near Snowdonia, making their headquarters at Bethgellert or Carnarvon, or at the utmost roaming no farther than the foot of Cader Idris. Amongst these fugitive members of our society, I recollect with especial pleasure Mr. De Haren, an accomplished young German, who held, or *had* held, the commission of lieutenant in our British navy, but now, in an interval of peace, was seeking to extend his knowledge of England, and also of the English language ; though in *that*, as regarded the fullest command of it colloquially, he had little, indeed, to learn. From him it was that I obtained my first lessons in German, and my first acquaintance with German literature. Paul Richter I then first heard of, together with Hippel, a humorist admired by Kant, and Hamann, also classed as a humorist, but a nondescript writer, singularly obscure, whom I have never since seen in the hands of any Englishman, except once of Sir William Hamilton. With all these writers Mr. De Haren had the means of making me usefully acquainted in the small portable library which filled one of his trunks. But the most stationary members of this semi-literary circle were Welshmen ; two of them lawyers, one a clergyman. This last had been regularly educated at Oxford — as a member of Jesus (the Welsh college) — and was

a man of extensive information. The lawyers had not enjoyed the same advantages, but they had read diligently, and were interesting companions. Wales, as is pretty well known, breeds a population somewhat litigious. I do not think the worse of them for *that*. The martial Butlers and the heroic Talbots of the fifteenth century, having no regular opening for their warlike fury in the seventeenth century, took to quarrelling with each other; and no letters are more bitter than those which to this day survive from the hostile correspondence of the brother \* Talbots contemporary with the last days of Shakespeare. One channel being closed against their martial propensities, naturally, they opened such others as circumstances made available. This temper, widely spread amongst the lower classes of the Welsh, made it a necessity that the lawyers should itinerate on market days through all the principal towns in their districts. In those towns continually I met them; and continually we renewed our literary friendship.

Meantime alternately I sailed upon the high-priced and the low-priced tack. So exceedingly cheap were provisions at that period, when the war taxation of Mr. Pitt was partially intermitting, that it was easy beyond measure upon any three weeks' expenditure, by living with cottagers, to save two guineas out of the three. Mr. De Haren assured me that even in an inn, and not in a poor man's cottage (but an unpretending rustic inn, where the mistress of the house took upon herself the function of every possible servant in turn — cook, waiter, chambermaid, boots, ostler), he had passed a day

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\* See especially in the book written by Sir Egerton Brydges (*I forget the title*) on the Peerage in the reign of James I.

or two; and for what he considered a really elegant dinner, as regarded everything except the table equipage (that being rude and coarse), he had paid only sixpence. This very inn, about ten or twelve miles south of Dolly, I myself visited some time later; and I found Mr. De Haren's account in all points confirmed; the sole drawback upon the comfort of the visitor being, that the fuel was chiefly of green wood, and with a chimney that smoked. I suffered so much under this kind of smoke, which irritates and inflames the eyes more than any other, that on the following day reluctantly I took leave of that obliging pluralist the landlady, and really felt myself blushing on settling the bill, until I bethought me of the green wood, which, upon the whole, seemed to balance the account. I could not then, nor can I now, account for these preposterously low prices; which same prices, strange to say, ruled (as Wordsworth and his sister often assured me) among the same kind of scenery — *i. e.*, amongst the English lakes — at the very same time. To account for it, as people often do, by alleging the want of markets for agricultural produce, is crazy political economy; since the remedy for paucity of markets, and consequent failure of competition, is, certainly not to sell at losing rates, but to forbear producing, and consequently not to sell at all.\*

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\* Thirteen years later — viz., in the year of Waterloo — happening to walk through the whole principality from south to north, beginning at Cardiff, and ending at Bangor, I turned aside about twenty-five miles to inquire after the health of my excellent hostess, that determined pluralist and intense antipole of all possible sinecurists. I found her cleaning a pair of boots and spurs, and purposing (I rather think) to enter next upon the elegant office of greasing a horse's heels in that design, however, she was thwarted for the present by myself

So cheap in fact were all provisions, which one had any chance of meeting with in a laboring man's house, that I found it difficult under such a roof to spend six-pence a day. Tea or coffee there was none; and I did not at that period very much care for either. Milk, with bread (coarse, but more agreeable by much than the insipid *whity-gray* bread of towns), potatoes if one wished, and also a little goat's, or kid's flesh — these composed the cottager's choice of viands; not luxurious, but palatable enough to a person who took much exercise. And, if one wished, fresh-water fish could be had cheap

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and another tourist who claimed her services in three or four other characters previously. I inquired after the chimney — was it still smoking? She seemed surprised that it had ever been suspected of anything criminal; so, as it was not a season for fires, I said no more. But I saw plenty of green wood, and but a small proportion of peats. I fear, therefore, that this, the state room of the whole concern still, poisons the peace of the unhappy tourists. One personal indemnification, meantime, I must mention which this little guilty room made to me on that same night for all the tears it had caused me to shed. It happened that there was a public dance held at this inn on this very night. I therefore retired early into my bedroom, having had so long a walk, and not wishing to annoy the company, or the excellent landlady, who had, I daresay, to play the fiddle to the dancers. The noise and uproar were almost insupportable; so that I could not sleep at all. At three o'clock all became silent, the company having departed in a body. Suddenly from the little parlor, separated from my bedroom overhead by the slightest and most pervious of ceilings, arose with the rising dawn the very sweetest of female voices perhaps that ever I had heard, although for many years an *habitué* of the opera. She was a stranger; a visitor from some distance; and (I was told in the morning) a Methodist. What she sang, or at least sang last, were the beautiful verses of Shirley, ending —

“ Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.”

This incident caused me to forget and forgive the wicked little chimney.



enough; especially trout of the very finest quality. In these circumstances, I never found it easy to spend even five shillings (no, not three shillings, unless whortleberries or fish had been bought) in one week. And thus it was easy enough to create funds for my periodical transmigrations back into the character of gentleman-tourist.

. . . . About this time — just when it was becoming daily more difficult to eke out the weekly funds for high-priced inns by the bivouacking system — as if some overmastering fiend, some instinct of migration, sorrowful but irresistible, were driving me forth to wander like the unhappy Io of the Grecian mythus, some oestrus of hidden persecution that bade my fly when no man pursued; not in false hope, for my hopes whispered but a doubtful chance, not in reasonable fear, for all was sweet pastoral quiet and autumnal beauty around me, suddenly I took a fierce resolution to sacrifice my weekly allowance, to slip my anchor, and to throw myself in desperation upon London. Not to make the case more frantic than it really was, let the reader remember what it was that I found grievous in my present position, and upon what possibilities it was that I relied for bettering it. With a more extended knowledge of life than I at that time had, it would not have been so hopeless a speculation for a boy, having my accomplishments, to launch himself on the boundless ocean of London. I possessed attainments that bore a money value. For instance, as a “*Reader*” to the Press in the field of Greek re-publications, I might perhaps have earned a livelihood. But these chances, which I really had, never occurred to me in the light of useful resources; or, to



Speak the truth, they were unknown to me ; and those, which I chiefly relied on, were most unlikely to prove available. But what, meantime, was it that I complained of in the life that I was at present living? It was this ; the dilemma proposed to my choice was — that if I *would* — positively *would* — have society, I must live at inns. But if I reconciled myself to a quiet stationary abode in some village or hamlet, in that case for *me*, so transcendently careless about diet, my weekly guinea would have procured all that I wanted ; and in some houses the advantage, quite indispensable to my comfort, of a private sitting-room. Yet even here the expense was most needlessly enhanced by the aristocratic luxuriousness of our English system, which presumes it impossible for a gentleman to sleep in his sitting-room. On this footing, however, I might perhaps have commanded clean and comfortable accommodations in some respectable families, to whom my noiseless habits, and my respectful courtesy to women, would have recommended me as a desirable inmate. But the deadly drawback on this scheme was — the utter want of access to books, or (generally speaking) to any intellectual intercourse. I languished all the day through, and all the week through — with nothing whatever, not so much as the county newspaper once in seven days to relieve my mortal ennui.

I have told the reader how inexplicably cheap was the life in poor men's cottages. But this did not affect the prices at the first-class hotels, where only I had any chance of meeting society. Those, and chiefly on the plea that the season was so brief, charged London prices. To meet such prices, it would no longer be possible, as

winter came on, to raise one-half the funds by passing half the time in a less costly mode. There was an end of any feasible plan for interleaving days of hardship with days of ease and intellectual luxury. Meantime, whilst this perplexity was resounding in one ear, in the other were continually echoing the kind offers of my Welsh friends, especially the two lawyers, to furnish me with any money which I might think necessary for my visit to London. Twelve guineas, at length, I mentioned as probably enough. This they lent me on the spot. And now, all at once, I was—ready for London.

My farewell to the Principality was in the same unassuming character of pedestrian tourist as that in which I had entered it. *Impedimenta* of any kind—that is, the encumbrances of horse or baggage—I had none even to the last. Where I pleased, and *when* I pleased, I could call a halt. My last halt of any duration was at Oswestry; mere accident carried me thither, and accident very naturally in so small a town threw me across the path of the very warmest amongst my Welsh friends, who, as it turned out, resided there. He, by mere coercion of kindness, detained me for several days; for denial he would not take. Being as yet unmarried, he could not vivify the other attractions of his most hospitable abode by the reinforcement of female society. His own, however, coming recommended as it did by the graces of a youthful frankness and a kindling intellect, was all-sufficient for the beguiling of the longest day. This Welsh friend was one of many whom I have crossed in life, chained by early accident or by domestic necessity to the calls of a professional service, whilst all

the while his whole nature, wild and refractory, ran headlong into intellectual channels that could not be trained into reconciliation with his hourly duties. His library was already large, and as select as under the ordinary chances of provincial book-collection could be reasonably expected. For generally one-half, at the least, of a young man's library in a provincial town may be characterized as a mere dropping or deposition from local accidents, a casual windfall of fruits stripped and strewed by the rough storms of bankruptcy. In many cases, again, such a provincial library will represent simply that part of the heavy baggage which many a family, on removing to some distant quarter, has shrunk from the cost of transporting, books being amongst the heaviest of household goods. Sometimes also, though more rarely, it happens that an ancient family dying out, having unavoidably left to executors the duty of selling every chattel attached to its ancient habits of life, suddenly with meteoric glare there emerges from its hiding place of centuries some great jewel of literature, a First Folio of the 1623 Shakspeare, an uncastrated *Decameron*, or other dazzling *κειμηλιον*. And thus it is that a large provincial library, though naturally and peacefully accumulated, yet sometimes shows mute evidence of convulsions and household tragedies; speaks as if by records of storms, and through dim mementoes of half-forgotten shipwrecks. Real shipwrecks present often such incoherent libraries on the floors of the hungry sea. Magnificent is the library that sleeps unvexed by criticism at the bottom of the ocean, Indian or Atlantic, from the mere annual contributions and keepsakes, the never ending *Forget-me-nots* of mighty English Indiamen. The

Halsewell, with its sad parting between the captain and his daughters, the Grosvenor, the Winterton, the Abergavenny, and scores of vessels on the same scale, with populations varying by births, deaths, and marriages, populations large as cities, and rich as gold mines, capable of factions and rebellions, all and each have liberally patronized, by the gift of many *Large-Paper* copies, that vast submarine Bodleian, which stands in far less risk from fire than the insolent Bodleian of the upper world. This private Oswestry library wore something of the same wild tumultuary aspect, fantastic and disordinate, but was not for that reason the less attractive; everything was there that you never expected to meet anywhere, but certainly not to meet in company; so that, what between the library and the mercurial conversation of its proprietor, elated by the rare advantage of fraternal sympathy, I was in danger of finding attractions strong enough to lay me asleep over the proprieties of the case, or even to set me a-dreaming over imaginary cases. In fact, I had some excuse for doing so; since I knew very imperfectly the common routine of my friend's life; and from *his* lofty Castilian sense of the obligations imposed by the great goddess Hospitality, I never should have been suffered to guess at the extent in which I was now gradually and unconsciously coming daily into collision with the regular calls upon his time. To ride off, under mask of "business," upon a circuit of a week, would, in *his* eyes, have been *virtually*, as regards the result, meanly and evasively, as regards the mode, to turn me out of his house. He would sooner have died. But in the meantime an accident, which revealed to me the true state of things, or at least revealed a suspicion

If it, all at once armed my sense of delicacy against any further lingering. Suddenly and peremptorily I announced my departure — *that* and the mode of it. For a long time he fought with unaffected zeal against my purpose, as nowise essential to his own free action. But at last, seeing that I was in earnest, he forebore to oppose my plan, contenting himself with guiding and improving its details. My plan had been, to walk over the border into England, as far as Shrewsbury (distant from Oswestry, I think, about eighteen miles), and there to ascend any of the heavy stages which would convey me cheaply to Birmingham — the grand focus to which all the routes of England in its main central area converge. Any such plan moved on the assumption that rain would be falling steadily and heavily — a reasonable assumption at the close of November. But, in the possible event of fair weather lasting over four or five days, what should prevent me from traversing the whole distance on foot? It is true, that the aristocratic scowl of the landlord might be looked for as a customary salutation at the close of each day's journey; but, unless at solitary posting-houses, this criminal fact of having advanced by base pedestrian methods, known only to patriarchs of older days and to modern "*tramps*" (so they are called in solemn acts of Parliament), is easily expiated and cleansed, by distributing your dust, should you fortunately have any to show, amongst the streets that you have invaded as a stranger. Happily the scandal of pedestrianism is in one respect more hopefully situated than that of scrofula or leprosy; it is not in any case written in your face. The man who is guilty of pedestrianism, on entering any town whatever, by the simple

artifice of diving into the crowds of those untainted by that guilt, will emerge, for all practical purposes, washed and re-baptized. The landlord, indeed, of any one inn knows that you did not reach *him* on horseback, or in a carriage; but you may have been visiting for weeks at the house of some distinguished citizen, whom it might be dangerous to offend; and you may even be favorably known at some other inn. Else, as a general imputation, undoubtedly pedestrianism, in the estimate of English landlords, carries with it the most awful shadow and shibboleth of the pariah. My Welsh friend knew this, and strongly urged me to take advantage of the public carriages, both on that motive and others. A journey of a hundred and eighty miles, as a pedestrian, would cost me nine or ten days; for which extent the mere amount of expenses at inns would more than defray the fare of the dearest carriage. To this there was no sound reply, except that corresponding expenses would arise, at any rate, on these nine or ten days, wherever I might be—in London, or on the road. However, as it seemed ungracious to offer too obstinate a resistance to suggestions prompted so entirely by consideration for my own comfort, I submitted to my friend's plan in all its details; one being that I should go by the Holyhead Mail, and not by any of the heavy coaches. This stipulation pointed to a novel feature in the machinery of travelling just then emerging. The light coaches charged almost mail prices. But the heavy coaches were at that time beginning to assume a new and dreadful form. Locomotion was so prodigiously on the increase, that, in order to meet its demands, the old form of coach (carrying at most six insides) was exchanging itself, on al



great roads, for a long, boat-like vehicle, very much resembling our modern detestable *omnibus*, but without our modern improvements. This carriage was called a "*long coach*," and the passengers, twelve or fourteen inside, sat along the sides; and, as ventilation was little regarded in those days — the very existence of an atmosphere being usually ignored — it followed that the horrors of Governor Holwell's black cage at Calcutta was every night repeated, in smaller proportions, upon every great English road. It was finally agreed that I should leave Oswestry on foot, simply with a view to the best enjoyment of the lovely weather; but that, as the mail passed through Oswestry, my friend should secure a place for me the whole way to London, so as to shut out competitors.

The day on which I left Oswestry (convoys for nearly five miles by my warm hearted friend) was a day of golden sunshine amongst the closing days of November. As truly as Jessica's moonlight ("Merchant of Venice"), this golden sunshine might be said to *sleep* upon the woods and the fields; so awful was the universal silence, so profound the death-like stillness. It was a day belonging to a brief and pathetic season of farewell summer resurrection, which, under one name or other, is known almost everywhere. In North America it is called the "Indian Summer." In North Germany and Midland Germany it is called the "Old Wives' Summer," and more rarely the "Girls' Summer." It is that last brief resurrection of summer in its most brilliant memorials, a resurrection that has no root in the past, nor steady hold upon the future, like the lambent and fitful gleams from an expiring lamp, mimicking what is called the "light-



ning before death" in sick patients, when close upon their end. There is the feeling of a conflict that has been going on between the lingering powers of summer and the strengthening powers of winter, not unlike that which moves by antagonist forces in some deadly inflammation hurrying forwards through fierce struggles into the final repose of mortification. For a time the equilibrium has been maintained between the hostile forces; but at last the antagonism is overthrown; the victory is accomplished for the powers that fight on the side of death; simultaneously with the conflict, the pain of conflict has departed: and thenceforward the gentle process of collapsing life, no longer fretted by counter-movements, slips away with holy peace into the noiseless deeps of the Infinite. So sweet, so ghostly, in its soft, golden smiles silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, faded through all its stages this departing day, along the whole length of which I bade farewell for many a year to Wales, and farewell to summer. In the very aspect and the sepulchral stillness of the motionless day, as solemnly it wore away through morning, noontide, afternoon, to meet the darkness that was hurrying to swallow up its beauty, I had a fantastic feeling as though I read the very language of resignation when bending before some irresistible agency. And at intervals I heard — in how different a key! — the raving, the everlasting uproar of that dreadful metropolis, which at every step was coming nearer, and beckoning (as it seemed) to myself for purposes as dim, for issues as incalculable, as the path of cannon-shots fired at random and in darkness.

It was not late, but it was at least two hours after

nightfall, when I reached Shrewsbury. Was I not liable to the suspicion of pedestrianism? Certainly I was: but, even if my criminality had been more unequivocally attested than it could be under the circumstances, still there is a *locus penitentiæ* in such a case. Surely a man may repent of *any* crime; and therefore of pedestrianism. I might have erred; and a court of *pie poudre* (dusty foot) might have found the evidences of my crime on my shoes. Yet secretly I might be forming good resolutions to do so no more. Certainly it looked like this, when I announced myself as a passenger "booked" for that night's mail. This character at once installed me as rightfully a guest of the inn, however profligate a life I might have previously led as a pedestrian. Accordingly I was received with special courtesy; and it so happened that I was received with something even like pomp. Four wax-lights carried before me by obedient mutes, these were but ordinary honors, meant (as old experience had instructed me) for the first engineering step towards effecting a lodgment upon the stranger's purse. In fact the wax-lights are used by innkeepers, both abroad and at home, to "try the range of their guns." If the stranger submits quietly, as a good anti-pedestrian ought surely to do, and fires no counter gun by way of protest, then he is recognized at once as passively within range, and amenable to orders. I have always looked upon this fine of five or seven shillings (for wax that you do not absolutely need) as a sort of inaugural *honorarium* entrance-money, what in jails used to be known as *smart* money, proclaiming me to be a man *comme il faut*; and no toll in this world of tolls do I pay so cheerfully. This, meantime, as I have said,

was too customary a form to confer much distinction. The wax-lights, to use the magnificent Grecian phrase *ἐπομπεῦε*, moved pompously before me, as the holy, holy fire, the inextinguishable fire and its golden hearth, moved before Cæsar *semper* Augustus, when he made his official or ceremonial *avatars*. Yet still this moved along the ordinary channels of glorification: it rolled along ancient grooves: I might say, indeed, like one of the twelve Cæsars when dying, *Ut puto, Deus fio* (It's my private opinion that at this very moment I am turning into a god), but still the metamorphosis was not complete. *That* was accomplished when I stepped into the sumptuous room allotted to me. It was a ball-room\* of noble proportions — lighted, if I chose to issue orders, by three gorgeous chandeliers, not basely wrapped up in paper, but sparkling through all their thickets of crystal branches, and flashing back the soft rays of my tall waxen lights. There were, moreover, two orchestras, which money would have filled within thirty minutes. And, upon the whole, one thing only was wanting — viz., a throne — for the completion of my *apotheosis*.

It might be seven P. M. when first I entered upon my kingdom. About three hours later I rose from my chair, and with considerable interest looked out into the night. For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising; and the whole atmosphere had, by this time,

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\* “*It was a ball-room:*” — The explanation of the case was simply, that the hotel was under some extensive process of purification, adornment, and, I believe, extension: and under the accident of being myself on that particular night the sole visitor of the house, I slipped unavoidably into the honors of a semi-regal reception.

become one vast laboratory of hostile movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights, and of those awful "sounds that live in darkness" (Wordsworth's "Excursion,") never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges — Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris — had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London — sole, dark, infinite — brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object, other thought, I could not admit. Long before midnight the whole household (with the exception of a solitary waiter) had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. More than ever I stood upon the brink of a precipice; and the local circumstances around me deepened and intensified these reflections, impressed upon them solemnity and terror, sometimes even horror. It is all but inconceivable to men of unyielding and callous sensibilities, how profoundly others find their reveries modified and overruled by the external characters of the immediate scene around them. Many a suicide that hung dubiously in the balances has been ratified, and carried into summary effect, through the forlorn, soul-revolting aspect of a crazy, dilapidated home. Oftentimes, without extravagance, the whole difference between a mind that spurns life, and the same mind reconciled to life, turns upon the outside features of that particular domestic scenery which hourly besieges the eyes. I, in this Shrewsbury hotel, naturally contemplated a group of objects tending to far different results. And yet in some respects they agreed.

The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller side-rooms — meant probably for cards or for refreshments. This single feature of the rooms — their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become the exponent of that altitude — this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music — all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along, all around me — household and town — sleeping, and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearance endlessly growing, threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself. Often I looked out and examined the night. Wild it was beyond all description, and dark as “the inside of a wolf’s throat.” But at intervals, when the wind, shifting continually, swept in such a direction as to clear away the vast curtain of vapor, the stars shone out, though with a light unusually dim and distant. Still, as I turned inwards to the echoing chambers, or outwards to the wild, wild night, I saw London expanding her visionary gates to receive me, like some dread

ful mouth of Acheron (*Acherontis avari*). Thou also, Whispering Gallery! once again in those moments of conscious and wilful desolation, didst to my ear utter monitorial sighs. For once again I was preparing to utter an irrevocable word, to enter upon one of those fatally tortuous paths of which the windings can never be unlinked.

Such thoughts, and visions without number corresponding to them, were moving across the *camera obscura* of my fermenting fancy, when suddenly I heard a sound of wheels; which, however, soon died off into some remote quarter. I guessed at the truth — viz., that it was the Holyhead Mail \* wheeling off on its primary duty of delivering its bags at the post-office. In a few minutes it was announced as having changed horses; and off I was to London.

#### THE PLANS LAID FOR LONDON LIFE.<sup>47</sup>

ALL the mails in the kingdom, with one solitary exception (that of Liverpool), in those days, were so ar-

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\* The Holyhead Mail, depending in its earliest stages upon winds and waters (though not upon tides), could not realize the same exquisite accuracy as mails that moved exclusively upon land. Sixty miles of watery transit between Dublin and Holyhead were performed with miraculous precision. The packets were intrusted by the General Post-office to none but post-captains, who had commanded frigates. And the salaries were so high as to make these commands confessedly prizes in nautical life, and objects of keen competition. No evil therefore, which care, foresight, and professional skill could remedy, was suffered to exist. Yet, after all, baffling winds would now and then (especially in three or four weeks *after* the equinox) make it impossible for the very ablest man, under the total defect of steam resources, to keep his time. Six hours, I believe, were allowed by the Post-office for the sixty miles; but at times this must have proved a very inadequate allowance.

ranged as to reach London early in the morning. Between the hours of four and six A. M., one after the other, according to their station upon the roll, all the mails from the N[orth] — the E[ast] — the W[est] — the S[outh] — whence, according to some curious etymologists, comes the magical word *NEWS* — drove up successively to the post-office, and rendered up their heart-shaking budgets; none earlier than four o'clock, none later than six. I am speaking of days when all things moved slowly. The condition of the roads was then such, that, in order to face it, a corresponding build of coaches hyperbolically massive was rendered necessary; the mails were upon principle made so strong as to be the heaviest of all carriages known to the wit or the experience of man; and from these joint evils of ponderous coaches and roads that were quagmires, it was impossible for even the picked breed of English coach-horses, all bone and blood, to carry forward their huge tonnage at a greater rate than six-and-a-half miles an hour. Consequently, it cost eight-and-twenty massy hours for us, leaving Shrewsbury at two o'clock in the dead of night, to reach the General Post-office, and faithfully to deposit upon the threshing-floors of Lombard Street, all that weight of love and hatred which Ireland had found herself able to muster through twenty-four hours in the great depot of Dublin, by way of donation to England.

On reflection, I have done myself some injustice. Not altogether without a plan had I been from the first; and in coming along I had matured it. My success in such a plan would turn upon my chance of borrowing on personal security. £200, without counting any interest



upon it, would subdivide into four sums of £50. Now, what interval was it that divided me from my majority; Simply an interval of four years. London, I knew or believed, was the dearest of all cities for three items of expenditure: (1) servants' wages; (2) lodgings;\* (3) dairy produce. In other things, London was often cheaper than most towns. Now, in a London street, having no pretensions beyond those of decent respectability, it has always been possible for the last half-century to obtain two furnished rooms at a weekly cost of half-a-guinea. This sum (or say £25) deducted, would leave me annually about the same sum for my other expenses. Too certainly I knew that this would suffice. If, therefore, I could obtain the £200, my plan was to withdraw from the knowledge of all my connections until I should become *mei juris* by course of law. In such a case, it is true that I must have waived all the advantages, fancied or real, small or great, from residence at a university. But, as in fact I never drew the slightest advantage or emolument from any university, my scheme when realized would have landed me in the same point which finally I attained by its failure. The plan was simple enough, but it rested on the assumption that I could melt the obduracy of money-lenders. On this point I had both hopes and fears.

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\* Not universally. Glasgow, if you travel from Hammerfest southwards (that is from the northernmost point of Norway, or Swedish Lapland, traversing all latitudes of Europe to Gibraltar on the west, or Naples on the east), is the one dearest place for lodgings known to man. A decent lodging for a single person, in Edinburgh which could be had readily for half-a guinea a-week, will in Glasgow cost a guinea. Glasgow, except as to servants, is a dearer abode than  
Lor don

But more irritating than either was the *delay*, which eventually I came to recognize as an essential element in the policy of all money-lenders: in that way only can they raise up such claims on behalf of their law-agents as may be fitted for sustaining their zeal.

. . . . .

I lost no time in opening the business which had brought me to London. By ten A. M., an hour when all men of business are presumed to be at their posts, personally or by proxy, I presented myself at the money-lender's office. My name was already known there: for I had, by letters from Wales, containing very plain and very accurate statements of my position in life and my pecuniary expectations (some of which statements it afterwards appeared that he had personally investigated and verified), endeavored to win his favorable attention. The money-lender, as it turned out, had one fixed rule of action. He never granted a personal interview to any man; no, not to the most beloved of his clients. One and all — myself, therefore, among the crowd — he referred for information, and for the means of prosecuting any kind of negotiation, to an attorney, who called himself, on most days of the week, by the name of Brunell, but occasionally (might it perhaps be on *red-letter* days?) by the more common name of Brown. Mr. Brunell-Brown, or Brown-Brunell, had located his hearth (if ever he had possessed one), and his household gods (when they were not in the custody of the sheriff,) in Greek Street, Soho. The house was not in itself, supposing that its face had been washed now and then, at all disrespectful. But it wore an unhappy countenance of gloom and unsocial fretfulness, due in reality

to the long neglect of painting, cleansing, and in some instances of repairing. There were, however no fractured panes of glass in the windows; and the deep silence which invested the house, not only from the absence of all visitors, but also of those common household functionaries, bakers, butchers, beer-carriers, sufficiently accounted for the desolation, by suggesting an excuse not strictly true — viz., that it might be tenantless. The house had already tenants through the day, though of a noiseless order, and was destined soon to increase them. Mr. Brown-Brunell, after reconnoitring me through a narrow side-window (such as is often attached to front-doors in London), admitted me cheerfully, and conducted me, as an honored guest, to his private *officina diplomatum* at the back of the house. From the expression of his face, but much more from the contradictory and self-counteracting play of his features, you gathered in a moment that he was a man who had much to conceal, and much, perhaps, that he would gladly forget. His eye expressed wariness against surprise, and passed in a moment into irrepressible glances of suspicion and alarm. No smile that ever his face naturally assumed, but was pulled short up by some freezing counteraction, or was chased by some close-following expression of sadness. One feature there was of relenting goodness and nobleness in Mr. Brunell's character, to which it was that subsequently I myself was most profoundly indebted for an asylum that saved my life. He had the deepest, the most liberal, and unaffected love of knowledge, but, above all, of that specific knowledge which we call literature. His own stormy (and no doubt oftentimes disgraceful) career in

life, that had entangled him in perpetual feuds with his fellow-men, he ascribed, with bitter imprecations, to the sudden interruption of his studies consequent upon his father's violent death, and to the necessity which threw him, at a boyish age, upon a professional life in the lower branches of law — threw him, therefore, upon daily temptations, by surrounding him with opportunities for taking advantages not strictly honorable, before he had formed any fixed principles at all. From the very first, Mr. Brunell had entered zealously into such conversations with myself as either gave openings for reviving his own delightful remembrances of classic authors, or brought up sometimes doubts for solution, sometimes perplexities and cases of intricate construction for illustration and disentanglement. Hunger-bitten as the house and the household genius seemed, wearing the legend of *Famine* upon every mantelpiece or “coigne of vantage,” and vehemently protesting, as it must have done through all its echoes, against the introduction of supernumerary mouths, nevertheless there was (and, I suppose, of necessity) a clerk, who bore the name of Pymont, or Pyemont, then first of all, then last of all, made known to me as a possible surname. Mr. Pymont had no *alias* — or not to my knowledge — except, indeed, in the vituperative vocabulary of Mr. Brunell, in which most variegated nomenclature he bore many scores of opprobrious names, having no reference whatever to any real habits of the man, good or bad. At two rooms' distance, Mr. Brunell always assumed a minute and circumstantial knowledge of what Pymont was doing then, and what he was going to do next. All which Pymont gave himself little trouble to answer, un-

less it happened (as now and then it did) that he could do so without ludicrous effect. What made the necessity for Pymont was the continual call for "an appearance" to be put in at some of the subordinate courts in Westminster — courts of conscience, sheriff courts, &c. But it happens often that he who is most indispensable, and gets through most work at one hour, becomes a useless burden at another; as the hardest working reaper seems, in the eyes of an ignoramus, on a wet, wintry day, to be a luxurious idler. Of these ups and downs in Pymont's working life, Mr. Brunell made a most cynical use; making out that Pymont not only did nothing, but also that he created much work for the afflicted Brunell. However, it happened occasionally that the truth vindicated itself, by making a call upon Pymont's physicks — aggressive or defensive — that needed an instant attention. "Pymont, I say; this way, Pymont — you're wanted, Pymont." In fact, both were big, hulking men, and had need to be so; for sometimes, whether with good reason or none, clients at the end of a losing suit, or of a suit nominally gained, but unexpectedly laden with heavy expenses, became refractory, showed fight, and gave Pymont reason for saying that at least on this day he had earned his salary by serving an ejection on a client whom on any other plan it might have been hard to settle with.

But I am anticipating. I go back, therefore, for a few explanatory words, to the day of my arrival in London. How beneficial to me would a little candor have been at that early period! If (which was the simple truth, known to all parties but myself) I had been told that nothing would be brought to a close in less

than six months, even assuming the ultimate adoption of my proposals, I should from the first have dismissed all hopes of this nature, as being unsuited to the practicalities of my situation. It will be seen further on, that there was a real and sincere intention of advancing the money wanted. But it was then too late. And universally I believe myself entitled to say, that even honorable lawyers will not in a case of this nature move at a faster pace: they will all alike loiter upon varied allegations through six months; and for this reason, that any shorter period, they fancy, will hardly seem to justify, in the eyes of their client, the sum which they find themselves entitled to charge for their trouble and their preliminary correspondence. How much better for both sides, and more honorable, as more frank and free from disguises, that the client should say, "Raise this sum" (of suppose, £400) "in three weeks, which can be done, if it can be done in three years, and here is a *bonus* of £100. Delay for two months, and I decline the whole transaction." Treated with that sort of openness, how much bodily suffering of an extreme order, and how much of the sickness from hope deferred, should I have escaped! Whereas, under the system (pursued with me as with all clients) of continually refreshing my hopes with new delusions, whiling me on with pretended preparation of deeds, and extorting from me, out of every little remittance I received from old family friends casually met in London, as much as possible for the purchase of imaginary stamps, the result was, that I myself was brought to the brink of destruction through pure inanition; whilst, on the other hand, those concerned in these deceptions gained nothing that might



not have been gained honorably and rightfully under a system of plain dealing. As it was, subject to these eternal deceptions, I continued for seven or eight weeks to live most parsimoniously in lodgings. These lodgings, though barely decent in my eyes, ran away with at least two thirds of my remaining guineas. At length, whilst it was yet possible to reserve a solitary half-guinea towards the more urgent interest of finding daily food, I gave up my rooms; and, stating exactly the circumstances in which I stood, requested permission of Mr. Brunell to make use of his large house as a nightly asylum from the open air. Parliament had not then made it a crime, next door to a felony, for a man to sleep out-of-doors (as some twenty years later was done by our benign legislators); as yet *that* was no crime. By the law I came to know sin; and looking back to the Cambrian hills from distant years, discovered to my surprise what a parliamentary wretch I had been in elder days, when I slept amongst cows on the open hill-sides. Lawful as yet this was; but not, therefore, less full of misery. Naturally, then, I was delighted when Mr. Brunell not only most readily assented to my request, but begged of me to come that very night, and urn the house to account as fully as I possibly could. The cheerfulness of such a concession brought with it one drawback. I now regretted that I had not, at a much earlier period, applied for this liberty; since I might thus have saved a considerable fund of guineas, applicable, of course, to all urgent necessities, but at this particular moment to one of clamorous urgency — viz., the purchase of blankets. O ancient women, daughters of toil and suffering, amongst all the hardships and bit-



ter inheritances of flesh that ye are called upon to face, not one — not even hunger — seems in my eyes comparable to that of nightly cold. To seek a refuge from cold in bed, and then, from the thin, gauzy texture of the miserable, worn-out blankets, “not to sleep a wink,” as Wordsworth records of poor old women in Dorsetshire, where coals, from local causes, were at the very dearest — what a terrific enemy was *that* for poor old grandmothers to face in fight! How feelingly I learned at this time, as heretofore I had learned on the wild hill-sides in Wales, what an unspeakable blessing is that of warmth! A more killing curse there does not exist for man or woman, than that bitter combat between the weariness that prompts sleep, and the keen, searching cold that forces you from the first access of sleep to start up horror-stricken, and to seek warmth vainly in renewed exercise, though long since fainting under fatigue. However, even without blankets, it was a fine thing to have an asylum from the open air; and to be assured of this asylum as long as I was likely to want it.

BARBARA LEWTHWAITE.<sup>48</sup>

THIS girl was a person of some poetic distinction, being (unconsciously to herself) the chief speaker in a little pastoral poem of Wordsworth's. That she was really beautiful, and not merely so described by me for the sake of improving the picturesque effect, the reader will judge from this line in the poem, written, perhaps, ten years earlier, when Barbara might be six years old :

“ 'T was little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare ! ”

This, coming from William Wordsworth, both a fastidious judge and a truth-speaker of the severest literality, argues some real pretensions to beauty, or real at that time. But it is notorious that, in the anthologies of earth through all her zones, one flower beyond every other is liable to change, which flower is the countenance of woman. Whether in his fine stanzas upon “ Mutability,” where the most pathetic instances of this earthly doom are solemnly arrayed, Spenser has dwelt sufficiently upon this the saddest of all, I do not remember.

Already Barbara Lewthwaite had contributed to the composition of two impressive pictures — first, in her infancy, with her pet lamb, under the evening shadows of the mighty Fairfield ; secondly, in her girlhood, with the turbaned Malay, and the little cottage child. But, subsequently, when a young woman, she entered unconsciously into the composition of another picture even more rememberable,

suggesting great names, connected with the greatest of themes ; the names being those of Plato, and, in this instance, at least, of a mightier than Plato, namely, William Wordsworth ; and the theme concerned being that problem which, measured by its interest to man, by its dependencies, by the infinite jewel staked upon the verdict, we should all confess to be the most solemn and heart-shaking that is hung out by golden chains from the heaven of heavens to human investigation, namely — Is the spirit of man numbered amongst things naturally perishable ? The doctrine of our own Dodwell (a most orthodox man), was, that naturally and *per se* it was perishable, but that by supernatural endowment it was made immortal. Apparently the ancient oracles of the Hebrew literature had all and everywhere assumed the soul's natural mortality. The single passage in Job, that *seemed* to look in the counter direction, has long since received an interpretation painfully alien from such a meaning ; not to mention that the same objection would apply to this passage, if read into a Christian sense, as applies to the ridiculous interpolation in Josephus describing Christ's personal appearance, namely — Once suppose it genuine, and why were there not myriads of other passages in the same key ? Imagine, for a moment, the writer so penetrated with premature Christian views, by what inexplicable rigor of abstinence had he forborne to meet ten thousand calls, at other turns of his work, for similar utterances of Christian sentiment ? It must not be supposed that the objections to this Christian interpretation of Job

rest solely with German scholars. Coleridge, one of the most devout and evangelical amongst modern theologians, took the same view; and has expressed it with decision. But Job is of slight importance in comparison with Moses. Now, Warburton, in his well-known argument, held, not only that Moses *did* (as a fact) assume the mortality of the soul, but that, as a necessity, he did so since upon this assumption rests the weightiest argument for his own divine mission. That Moses could dispense with a support which Warburton fancied all other legislators had needed and postulated, argued, in the bishop's opinion, a vicarious support—a secret and divine support. This extreme view will be rejected, perhaps, by most people. But, in the mean time, the very existence of such a sect as the Sadducees proves sufficiently that no positive affirmation of the soul's immortality could have been accredited amongst the Hebrew nation as a Mosaic doctrine. The rise of a counter sect, the Pharisees, occurred in later days, clearly under a principle of "development" applied to old traditions current among the Jews. It was not alleged as a Mosaic doctrine, but as something deducible from traditions countenanced by Moses.

From Hebrew literature, therefore, no help is to be looked for on this great question. Pagan literature first of all furnishes any response upon it favorable to human yearnings. But, unhappily, the main argument upon which the sophist in the *Phædo* relies, is a pure scholastic conundrum, baseless and puerile. The homogeneity of human consciousness, upon which is made to rest its indestructibility, is not established

or made probable by any plausible logic. If we should figure to ourselves some mighty angel mounting guard upon human interests twenty-three centuries ago, this tutelary spirit would have smiled derisively upon the advent and the departure of Plato. At length, once again, after many centuries, was heard the clarion of immortality — not as of any preternatural gift, but as a natural prerogative of the human spirit. This time the angel would have paused and hearkened. The auguries for immortality, which Wordsworth drew from indications running along the line of daily human experience, were two. The first was involved in the exquisite little poem of “We are Seven.” That authentic voice, said Wordsworth, which affirmed life as a necessity inalienable from man’s consciousness, was a revelation through the lips of childhood. Life in its torrent fulness — that is, life in its earliest stage — affirmed itself; whereas the voice which whispered doubts was an adventitious and secondary voice consequent upon an earthly experience. The child in this little poem is unable to admit the thought of death, though, in compliance with custom, she uses the word.

“The first that *died* was little Jane;  
 In bed she moaning lay;  
 Till God released her from her pain,  
 And then she went away.”

The graves of her brother and sister she is so far from regarding as any argument of their having died, that she supposes the stranger simply to doubt her statement, and she reiterates her assertion of their

graves as lying in the churchyard, in order to prove that they were *living*:

“ ‘ Their graves are green, they may be seen,’  
 The little maid replied,  
 ‘ Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,  
 And they are side by side.  
 And often after sunset, sir,  
 When it is light and fair,  
 I take my little porringer,  
 And eat my supper there.  
 My stockings there I often knit,  
 My kerchief there I hem ;  
 And there upon their graves I sit —  
 I sit, and sing to them.’ ”

The other argument was developed in the sublime “ Ode upon the Intimations of Immortality,” &c Man in his infancy stood *nearest* (so much was matter of fact) to the unseen world of the Infinite. What voices he heard most frequently, murmuring through the cells of his infantine brain, were echoes of the great realities which, as a new-born infant, he had just quitted. Hanging upon his mother’s breast, he heard dim prolongations of a music which belonged to a life ever more and more receding into a distance buried in clouds and vapors. Man’s orient, in which lie the fountains of the dawn, must be sought for in that Eden of infancy which first received him as a traveller emerging from a world now daily becoming more distant. And it is a great argument of the divine splendor investing man’s natural home, that the heavenly lights which burned in his morning grow fainter and fainter as he “ travels further from the East.”

The little Carnarvonshire child in "We are Seven," who is represented as repelling the idea of death under an absolute inability to receive it, had completed her eighth year. But this might be an ambitious exaggeration, such as aspiring female children are generally disposed to practise. It is more probable that she might be in the currency of her eighth year. Naturally we must not exact from Wordsworth any pedantic rigor of accuracy in such a case; but assuredly we have a right to presume that his principle, if tenable at all, must apply to all children below the age of *five*. However, I will say *four*. In that case the following anecdote seems to impeach the philosophic truth of this doctrine. I give the memorandum as it was drawn up by myself at the time:

My second child, but eldest daughter, little M——, is between two and three weeks less than two years old; and from the day of her birth she has been uniformly attended by Barbara Lewthwaite. We are now in the first days of June; but, about three weeks since, consequently in the earlier half of May, some one of our neighbors gave to M—— a little bird. I am no great ornithologist. "Perhaps only a tenth-rate one," says some too flattering reader. O dear, no, nothing near it; I fear, no more than a five hundred and tenth rater. Consequently, I cannot ornithologically describe or classify the bird. But I believe that it belonged to the family of finches — either a goldfinch, bullfinch, or at least something ending in *inch*. The present was less splendid than at first it seemed. For the bird was wounded; though



not in a way that made the wound apparent; and too sensibly as the evening wore away it drooped. None of us knew what medical treatment to suggest; and all that occurred was to place it with free access to bird-seed and water. At length sunset arrived, which was the signal for M——'s departure to bed. She came, therefore, as usual to me, threw her arms round my neck, and went through her ordinary routine of prayers; namely, first, the Lord's Prayer, and, finally, the four following lines (a Roman Catholic bequest to the children of Northern England):

“ Holy \* Jesus, meek and mild,  
 Look on me, a little child;  
 Pity my simplicity;  
 Grant that I may come to thee.”

M——, as she was moving off to bed, whispered to me that I was to “mend” the bird with “yoddo-num.” Having always seen *me* taking laudanum, and for the purpose (as she was told) of growing better in health, reasonably it struck her that the little bird would improve under the same regimen. For her satisfaction, I placed a little diluted laudanum near to the bird; and she then departed to bed, though with uneasy looks reverting to her sick little pet. Occupied with some point of study, it happened that I sat up through the whole night; and

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\* “*Holy Jesus:*” — This was a very judicious correction introduced by Wordsworth. Originally the traditional line had stood, Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.” But Wordsworth, offended by the idle iteration of one idea in the words, gentle, meek, mild, corrected the text into *Holy*.

long before seven o'clock in the morning she had summoned Barbara to dress her, and soon I heard the impatient little foot descending the stairs to my study. I had such a Jesuitical *bulletin* ready, by way of a report upon the bird's health, as might not seem absolutely despairing, though not too dangerously sanguine. And, as the morning was one of heavenly splendor, I proposed that we should improve the bird's chances by taking it out-of-doors into the little orchard at the foot of Fairfield — our loftiest Grasmere mountain. Thither moved at once Barbara Lewthwaite, little M——, myself, and the poor languishing bird. By that time in May, in any far southern county, perhaps the birds would be ceasing to sing; but not so with us dilatory people in Westmoreland. Suddenly, as we all stood around the little perch on which the bird rested, one thrilling song, louder than the rest, arose from a neighboring hedge. Immediately the bird's eye, previously dull, kindled into momentary fire; the bird rose on its perch, struggled for an instant, seemed to be expanding its wings, made one aspiring movement upwards, in doing so fell back, and in another moment was dead. Too certainly and apparently all these transitions symbolically interpreted themselves, and to all of us alike; the proof of which was — that man, woman, and child spontaneously shed tears; a weakness, perhaps, but more natural under the regular processional evolution of the scenical stages, than when simply read as a narrative; for too evident it was, to one and all of us, without needing to communicate by words, *what* vision had revealed itself

to all alike — to the child under two years old, not less than to the adults ; too evident it was, that, on this magnificent May morning, there had been exhibited, as on the stage of a theatre — there had passed before the eyes of us all — passed, and was finished — the everlasting mystery of death ! It seemed to me that little M——, by her sudden burst of tears, must have read this saddest of truths — must have felt that the bird's fate was sealed — not less clearly than Barbara or myself.

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## THE DAUGHTER OF LEBANON.

### AN OPIUM DREAM.

PREFATORY NOTE. — By accident, a considerable part of the Confessions (all, in short, except the Dreams) had originally been written hastily ; and, from various causes, had never received any strict revision, or, *virtually*, so much as an ordinary verbal correction. But a great deal more was wanted than this. The main narrative should naturally have moved through a succession of secondary incidents ; and, with leisure for recalling these, it might have been greatly inspirited. Wanting all opportunity for such advantages, this narrative had been needlessly impoverished. And thus it had happened that not so properly correction and retrenchment were called for, as integration of what had been left imperfect, or amplification of what, from the first, had been insufficiently expanded. \* \* \* \* I had relied upon a crowning grace, which I had reserved for the final pages of this volume. in a succession of some twenty or twenty-five dreams and noon-day visions, which had arisen under the latter stages of opium influence. These have disappeared : some under circumstances which allow me a reasonable prospect of recovering them ; some unaccountably ; and some dishonorably. Five or six, I believe, were

burned in a sudden conflagration which arose from the spark of a candle falling unobserved amongst a very large pile of papers in a bedroom, when I was alone and reading. Falling not *on*, but *amongst* and *within* the papers, the fire would soon have been ahead of conflict ; and, by communicating with the slight wood-work and draperies of a bed, it would have immediately enveloped the laths of a ceiling overhead, and thus the house, far from fire-engines, would have been burned down in half-an-hour. My attention was first drawn by a sudden light upon my book ; and the whole difference between a total destruction of the premises and a trivial loss (from books charred) of five guineas, was due to a large Spanish cloak. This, thrown over, and then drawn down tightly, by the aid of one sole person, somewhat agitated, but retaining her presence of mind, effectually extinguished the fire. Amongst the papers burned partially, but not so burned as to be absolutely irretrievable, was the " Daughter of Lebanon ; " and this I have printed, and have intentionally placed it at the end, as appropriately closing a record in which the case of poor Ann the Outcast formed not only the most memorable and the most suggestively pathetic incident, but also *that* which, more than any other, colored — or (more truly I should say) shaped, moulded and remoulded, composed and decomposed — the great body of opium dreams. The search after the lost features of Ann, which I spoke of as pursued in the crowds of London, was in a more proper sense pursued through many a year in dreams. The general idea of a search and a chase reproduced itself in many shapes. The person, the rank, the age, the scenical position, all varied themselves forever ; but the same leading traits more or less faintly remained of a lost Pariah woman, and of some shadowy malice which withdrew her, or attempted to withdraw her, from restoration and from hope. Such is the explanation which I offer why that particular addition, which some of my friends had been authorized to look for, has not in the main been given, nor for the present *could* be given ; and, secondly, why that part which is given has been placed in the conspicuous situation (as a closing passage) which it now occupies.

DAMASCUS, first-born of cities, *Om el Denia*,\* mother of generations, that wast before Abraham, that wast before the Pyramids! what sounds are those that, from a postern gate, looking eastwards over secret paths that wind away to the far distant desert, break the solemn silence of an oriental night? Whose voice is that which calls upon the spearmen, keeping watch forever in the turret surmounting the gate, to receive him back into his Syrian home? Thou knowest him, Damascus, and hast known him in seasons of trouble as one learned in the afflictions of man; wise alike to take counsel for the suffering spirit or for the suffering body. The voice that breaks upon the night is the voice of a great evangelist—one of the four; and he is also a great physician. This do the watchmen at the gate thankfully acknowledge, and joyfully they give him entrance. His sandals are white with dust; for he has been roaming for weeks beyond the desert, under the guidance of Arabs, on missions of hopeful benignity to Palmyra; † and in spirit he is weary of all

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\* “*Om el Denia* :” — Mother of the World is the Arabic title of Damascus. That it was before Abraham — that is, already an old establishment much more than a thousand years before the siege of Troy, and than two thousand years before our Christian era — may be inferred from Gen. xv. 2; and, by the general consent of all eastern races, Damascus is accredited as taking precedency in age of all cities to the west of the Indus.

† Palmyra had not yet reached its meridian splendor of Grecian development, as afterwards near the age of Aurelian, but it was already a noble city.

things, except faithfulness to God, and burning love to man.

Eastern cities are asleep betimes ; and sounds few or none fretted the quiet of all around him, as the evangelist paced onward to the market-place ; but there another scene awaited him. On the right hand, in an upper chamber, with lattices widely expanded, sat a festal company of youths, revelling under a noonday blaze of light, from cressets and from bright tripods that burned fragrant woods — all joining in choral songs, all crowned with odorous wreaths from Daphne and the banks of the Orontes. Them the evangelist heeded not ; but far away upon the left, close upon a sheltered nook, lighted up by a solitary vase of iron fretwork filled with cedar boughs, and hoisted high upon a spear, behold there sat a woman of loveliness so transcendent, that, when suddenly revealed, as now, out of deepest darkness, she appalled men as a mockery, or a birth of the air. Was she born of woman ? Was it perhaps the angel — so the evangelist argued with himself — that met him in the desert after sunset, and strengthened him by secret talk ? The evangelist went up, and touched her forehead ; and when he found that she was indeed human, and guessed, from the station which she had chosen, that she waited for some one amongst this dissolute crew as her companion, he groaned heavily in spirit, and said, half to himself, but half to her, “ Wert thou, poor, ruined flower, adorned so divinely at thy birth — glorified in such excess, that not Solomon in all his pomp, no, nor even the lilies of the field, can approach thy gifts —

only that thou shouldest grieve the Holy Spirit of God?" The woman trembled exceedingly, and said, "Rabbi, what should I do? For behold! all men forsake me." The evangelist mused a little, and then secretly to himself he said, "Now will I search this woman's heart, whether in very truth it inclineth itself to God, and hath strayed only before fiery compulsion." Turning therefore to the woman, the Prophet\* said, "Listen: I am the messenger of Him whom thou hast not known; of Him that made Lebanon, and the cedars of Lebanon; that made the sea, and the heavens, and the host of the stars; that made the light; that made the darkness; that blew the spirit of life into the nostrils of man. His messenger I am: and from Him all power is given me to bind and to loose, to build and to pull down. Ask, therefore, whatsoever thou wilt — great or small — and through me thou shalt receive it from God. But, my child, ask not amiss. For God is able out of thy own evil asking to weave snares for thy footing.

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\* "*The Prophet*:" — Though a Prophet was not *therefore* and in virtue of that character an Evangelist, yet every Evangelist was necessarily in the scriptural sense a Prophet. For let it be remembered that a Prophet did not mean a *Predicter* or *Fore-shower* of events, except derivatively and inferentially. What *was* a Prophet in the uniform scriptural sense? He was a man, who drew aside the curtain from the secret counsels of Heaven. He declared, or made public, the previously hidden truths of God: and because future events might chance to involve divine truth, therefore a revealer of future events might happen so far to be a Prophet. Yet still small was that part of a Prophet's functions which concerned the foreshowing of events; and not necessarily *my* part.



And oftentimes to the lambs whom he loves he gives, by seeming to refuse ; gives in some better sense, or ” (and his voice swelled into the power of anthems) “ in some far happier world. Now, therefore, my daughter, be wise on thy own behalf, and say what it is that I shall ask for thee from God.” But the Daughter of Lebanon needed not his caution ; for immediately dropping on one knee to God’s ambassador, whilst the full radiance from the cedar torch fell upon the glory of a penitential eye, she raised her clasped hands in supplication, and said, in answer to the evangelist asking for a second time what gift he should call down upon her from Heaven, “ Lord, that thou wouldest put me back into my father’s house.” And the evangelist, because he was human, dropped a tear as he stooped to kiss her forehead, saying, “ Daughter, thy prayer is heard in heaven ; and I tell thee that the daylight shall not come and go for thirty times, not for the thirtieth time shall the sun drop behind Lebanon, before I will put thee back into thy father’s house.”

Thus the lovely lady came into the guardianship of the evangelist. She sought not to varnish her history, or to palliate her own transgressions. In so far as she had offended at all, her case was that of millions in every generation. Her father was a prince in Lebanon, proud, unforgiving, austere. The wrongs done to his daughter by her dishonorable lover, because done under favor of opportunities created by her confidence in his integrity, her father persisted in resenting as wrongs done by this injured daughter herself ; and, refusing to her all protection,

drove her, whilst yet confessedly innocent, into criminal compliances under sudden necessities of seeking daily bread from her own uninstructed efforts. Great was the wrong she suffered both from father and lover; great was the retribution. She lost a churlish father and a wicked lover; she gained an apostolic guardian. She lost a princely station in Lebanon; she gained an early heritage in heaven. For this heritage is hers within thirty days, if she will not defeat it herself. And, whilst the stealthy motion of time travelled towards this thirtieth day, behold! a burning fever desolated Damascus, which also laid its arrest upon the Daughter of Lebanon, yet gently, and so that hardly for an hour did it withdraw her from the heavenly teachings of the evangelist. And thus daily the doubt was strengthened, would the holy apostle suddenly touch her with his hand, and say, "Woman, be thou whole!" or would he present her on the thirtieth day as a pure bride to Christ? But perfect freedom belongs to Christian service, and she only must make the election.

Up rose the sun on the thirtieth morning in all his pomp, but suddenly was darkened by driving storms. Not until noon was the heavenly orb again revealed; then the glorious light was again unmasked, and again the Syrian valleys rejoiced. This was the hour already appointed for the baptism of the new Christian daughter. Heaven and earth shed gratulation on the happy festival; and, when all was finished, under an awning raised above the level roof of her dwelling-house, the regenerate daughter of Lebanon

looking over the rose-gardens of Damascus, with amplest prospect of her native hills, lay, in blissful trance, making proclamation, by her white baptismal robes, of recovered innocence and of reconciliation with God. And, when the sun was declining to the west, the evangelist, who had sat from noon by the bedside of his spiritual daughter, rose solemnly, and said, "Lady of Lebanon, the day is already come, and the hour is coming, in which my covenant must be fulfilled with thee. Wilt thou, therefore, being now wiser in thy thoughts, suffer God, thy new Father, to give by seeming to refuse; to give in some better sense, or in some far happier world?" But the Daughter of Lebanon sorrowed at these words; she yearned after her native hills; not for themselves, but because there it was that she had left that sweet twin-born sister, with whom from infant days hand-in-hand she had wandered amongst the everlasting cedars. And again the evangelist sat down by her bedside; whilst she by intervals communed with him, and by intervals slept gently under the oppression of her fever. But as evening drew nearer, and it wanted now but a brief space to the going down of the sun, once again, and with deeper solemnity, the evangelist rose to his feet, and said, "O daughter! this is the thirtieth day, and the sun is drawing near to his rest; brief, therefore, is the time within which I must fulfil the word that God spoke to thee by me." Then, because light clouds of delirium were playing about her brain, he raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to her temples, rebuked the clouds, and bade that **no more**

they should trouble her vision, or stand between her and the forests of Lebanon. And the delirious clouds parted asunder, breaking away to the right and to the left. But upon the forests of Lebanon there hung a mighty mass of overshadowing vapors, bequeathed by the morning's storm. And a second time the evangelist raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to the gloomy vapors, rebuked them, and bade that no more they should stand between his daughter and her father's house. And immediately the dark vapors broke away from Lebanon to the right and to the left; and the farewell radiance of the sun lighted up all the paths that ran between the everlasting cedars and her father's palace. But vainly the lady of Lebanon searched every path with her eyes for memorials of her sister. And the evangelist, pitying her sorrow, turned away her eyes to the clear blue sky, which the departing vapors had exposed. And he showed her the peace which was there. And then he said, "O daughter! this also is but a mask." And immediately for the third time he raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to the fair blue sky, he rebuked it, and bade that no more it should stand between her and the vision of God. Immediately the blue sky parted to the right and to the left, laying bare the infinite revelations that can be made visible only to dying eyes. And the Daughter of Lebanon said to the evangelist, "O father! what armies are these that I see mustering within the infinite chasm?" And the evangelist replied, "These are the armies of Christ, and they are mustering to receive some dear human blossom, some

first-fruits of Christian faith, that shall rise this night to Christ from Damascus." Suddenly, as thus the child of Lebanon gazed upon the mighty vision, she saw bending forward from the heavenly host, as if in gratulation to herself, the one countenance for which she hungered and thirsted. The twin-sister, that should have waited for her in Lebanon, had died of grief, and was waiting for her in Paradise. Immediately in rapture she soared upwards from her couch; immediately in weakness she fell back; and, being caught by the evangelist, she flung her arms around his neck, whilst he breathed into her ear his final whisper, "Wilt thou now suffer that God should give by seeming to refuse?"—"O yes—yes—yes!" was the fervent answer from the Daughter of Lebanon. Immediately the evangelist gave the signal to the heavens, and the heavens gave the signal to the sun; and in one minute after the Daughter of Lebanon had fallen back a marble corpse amongst her white baptismal robes; the solar orb dropped behind Lebanon; and the evangelist, with eyes glorified by mortal and immortal tears, rendered thanks to God that had thus accomplished the word which he spoke through himself to the Magdalen of Lebanon—that not for the thirtieth time should the sun go down behind her native hills, before he had put her back into her Father's house.

NOTES ON THE USE OF OPIUM.<sup>49</sup>

FIFTY-AND-TWO year's experience of opium, as a magical resource under *all* modes of bodily suffering, I may now claim to have had — allowing only for some periods of four or six months, during which, by unexampled efforts of self-conquest, I had accomplished a determined abstinence from opium.\* These parenthesis

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\* With what final result, I have much difficulty in saying. Invariably, after such victories, I returned, upon deliberate choice (after weighing all the consequences on this side and on that), to the daily use of opium. But with silent changes, many and great (worked apparently by these reiterated struggles), in the opium-eating habits. Amongst other changes was this, that the quantity required gradually fell by an enormous proportion. According to the modern slang phrase, I had in the meridian stage of my opium career used "*fabulous*" quantities. Stating the quantities — not in solid opium, but in the tincture (known to everybody as *laudanum*) — my daily ration was eight thousand drops. If you write down that amount in the ordinary way as 8000, you see at a glance that you may read it into eight quantities of a thousand, or eight hundred quantities of ten, or lastly, into eighty quantities of one hundred. Now, a single quantity of one hundred will about fill a very old-fashioned obsolete teaspoon, of that order which you find still lingering amongst the respectable poor. Eighty such quantities, therefore, would have filled eighty of such antediluvian spoons — that is, it would have been the common hospital dose for three hundred and twenty adult patients. But the ordinary teaspoon of this present nineteenth century is nearly as capacious as the dessert-spoon of our ancestors. Which I have heard accounted for thus: Throughout the eighteenth century, when first tea became known to the working population, the tea-drinkers were almost exclusively women; men, even in educated classes, very often persisting (down to the French revolution) in treating such a beverage as an idle and effeminate indulgence. This obstinate twist in masculine habits it was that secretly controlled the manufacture of teaspoons. Up to Waterloo, teaspoons were adjusted chiefly to the calibre of female mouths. Since then, greatly to the benefit of the national health, the grosser and brownest sex have universally fallen into the effeminate

being subtracted, as also, and secondly, some off-and-on fits of tentative and intermitting dalliance with opium in the opening of my career — these deductions allowed for, I may describe myself as experimentally acquainted with opium for something more than half-a-century. What, then, is my final report upon its good and evil results? In particular, upon these two capital tendencies of habitual opium-eating under the popular misconceptions — viz., its supposed necessity of continually clamoring for increasing quantities; secondly, its supposed corresponding declension in power and efficacy. Upon these ugly scandals, what is my most deliberate award? At the age of forty, the reader is aware that, under our ancestral proverb, every man is a fool or a physician. Apparently our excellent ancestors, aiming undeniably at alliteration, spelled *physician* with an *f*, And why not? A man's physic might be undeniable, although his spelling should be open to some slight improvements. But I presume that the proverb meant to exact from any man only so much medical skill as should undertake the responsibility of his own individual health. It is my duty, it seems, thus far to be a physician — to guarantee, so far as human foresight *can* guarantee, my own corporeal sanity. And this, trying the case by ordinary practical tests, I have accomplished. And I add solemnly, that without opium, most certainly I could not have accomplished such a result. Thirty-five years ago, beyond all doubt, I should have been in my grave. And as to the two popular dilemmas — that either you

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habit of tea-drinking; and the capacity of teaspoons has naturally conformed to the new order of cormorant mouths that have alighted by myriads upon the tea-trays of these later generations.



must renounce opium, or else indefinitely augment the daily ration; and, secondly, that, even submitting to such a postulate, you must content yourself, under any scale of doses, with an effect continually decaying, in fact, that you must ultimately descend into the despairing condition of the martyr to dram-drinking — at this point, I make a resolute stand, in blank denial of the whole doctrine. Originally, when first entering upon my opium career, I did so with great anxiety: and before my eyes floated forever the analogies — dim, or *not* dim, according to my spirits at the moment — of the poor, perishing brandy-drinker, often on the brink of *delirium tremens!* Opium I pursued under a harsh necessity, as an unknown, shadowy power, leading I knew not whither, and a power that might suddenly change countenance upon this unknown road. Habitually I lived under such an impression of awe as we have all felt from stories of fawns, or seeming fawns, that have run before some mounted hunter for many a league, until they have tempted him far into the mazes of a boundless forest, and at that point, where all regress had become lost and impossible, either suddenly vanished, leaving the man utterly bewildered, or assumed some more fearful shape. A part of the evil which I feared actually unfolded itself; but all was due to my own ignorance, to neglect of cautionary measures, or to gross mismanagement of my health in points where I well knew the risks but grievously underrated their urgency and pressure. I was temperate: that solitary advantage I had; but I sank under the lulling seductions of opium into total sedentariness, and *that* whilst holding firmly the belief, that powerful exercise was omnipotent

against all modes of debility or obscure nervous irritations. The account of my depression, and almost of my helplessness, in the next memorandum (No. 3), is faithful as a description to the real case. But, in ascribing that case to opium, as any transcendent and overmastering agency, I was thoroughly wrong. Twenty days of exercise, twenty times twenty miles of walking, at the ordinary pace of three and a-half miles an hour, or perhaps half that amount, would have sent me up as buoyantly as a balloon into regions of natural and healthy excitement, where dejection is an impossible phenomenon. O heavens! how man abuses or neglects his natural resources! Yes, the thoughtful reader is disposed to say; but very possibly distinguishing between such *natural* resources and opium as a resource that is *not* natural, but highly artificial, or even absolutely unnatural. I think otherwise: upon the basis of my really vast, perhaps unequalled, experience (let me add of my *tentative* experience, varying its trials in every conceivable mode, so as to meet the question at issue under every angle), I advance these three following propositions, all of them unsuspected by the popular mind, and the last of them (as cannot much longer fail to be discovered) bearing a national value — I mean, as meeting our English hereditary complaint: —

1. With respect to the morbid growth upon the opium-eater of his peculiar habit, when once rooted in the system, and throwing out *tentacula* like a cancer, it is out of my power to deliver any such oracular judgment upon the case — *i. e.*, upon the apparent danger of such a course, and by what stages it might be expected to travel towards its final consummation — as naturally I should wish

to do. Being an oracle, it is my wish to behave myself like an oracle, and not to evade any decent man's questions in the way that Apollo too often did at Delphi. But, in this particular instance before me, the accident of my own individual seamanship in presence of this storm interfered with the natural evolution of the problem in its extreme form of danger. I had become too uneasy under the consciousness of that intensely artificial condition into which I had imperceptibly lapsed through unprecedented quantities of opium; the shadows of eclipse were too dark and lurid not to rouse and alarm me into a spasmodic effort for reconquering the ground which I had lost. Such an effort I made: every step by which I had gone astray did I patiently unthread. And thus I fought off the natural and spontaneous catastrophe, whatever *that* might be, which mighty Nature would else have let loose for redressing the wrongs offered to herself. But what followed? In six or eight months more, upon fresh movements arising of insupportable nervous irritation, I fled back into the same opium lull. To and fro, up and down, did I tilt upon those mountainous seas, for year after year. "See-saw,\* like Margery Daw, that sold her bed and lay on straw." Even so did I, led astray, perhaps, by the classical example of Miss Daw, see-saw for year after year, out and in, of manœuvres the most in-

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\* "See-saw," &c.:—O dear reader, surely you don't want an oracle to tell you that this is a good old nursery lyric, which through four centuries has stood the criticism—stood the anger against Daw's enemies—stood the pity for Daw herself, so infamously reduced to straw—of children through eighty generations, reckoning five years to each nursery succession.

tricate, dances the most elaborate, receding or approaching, round my great central sun of opium. Sometimes I ran perilously close into my perihelion; sometimes I became frightened, and wheeled off into a vast cometary aphelion, where for six months "opium" was a word unknown. How nature stood all these see-sawings is quite a mystery to me: I must have led her a sad life in those days. Nervous irritation forced me, at times, upon frightful excesses; but terror from anomalous symptoms sooner or later forced me back. This terror was strengthened by the vague hypothesis current at that period about spontaneous combustion. Might I not myself take leave of the literary world in that fashion? According to the popular fancy, there were two modes of this spontaneity; and really very little to choose between them. Upon one variety of this explosion, a man blew up in the dark, without match or candle near him, leaving nothing behind him but some bones, of no use to anybody, and which were supposed to be *his* only because nobody else ever applied for them. It was fancied that some volcanic agency — an unknown deposition — accumulated from some vast redundancy of brandy, furnished the self-exploding principle. But this startled the faith of most people; and a more plausible scheme suggested itself, which depended upon the concurrence of a lucifer-match. Without an incendiary, a man could not take fire. We sometimes see the hands of inveterate dram-drinkers throw off an atmosphere of intoxicating vapors strong enough to lay flies into a state of sleep or *coma*; and on the same principle, it was supposed that the breath might be so loaded with spirituous particles, as to catch

fire from a match applied to a pipe when held between the lips. If so, then what should hinder the "devouring element" (as newspapers call fire) from spreading through the throat to the cavity of the chest: in which case, not being insured, the man would naturally become a total loss. Opium, however, it will occur to the reader, is not alcohol. That is true. But it might, for anything that was known experimentally, be ultimately worse. Coleridge, the only person known to the public as having dallied systematically and for many years with opium, could not be looked to for any candid report of its history and progress; besides that, Coleridge was under a permanent craze of having nearly accomplished his own liberation from opium; and thus he had come to have an *extra* reason for self-delusion. Finding myself, therefore, walking on a solitary path of bad repute, leading *whither* no man's experience could tell me, I became proportionably cautious; and if nature had any plot for making an example of me, I was resolved to baulk her. Thus it was that I never followed out the seductions of opium to their final extremity. But, nevertheless, in evading that extremity, I stumbled upon as great a discovery as if I had *not* evaded it. After the first or second self-conquest in this conflict — although finding it impossible to persist through more than a few months in the abstinence from opium — I remarked, however, that the domineering tyranny of its exactions was at length steadily declining. Quantities noticeably less had now become sufficient: and after the fourth of these victories, won with continually decreasing efforts, I found that not only had the daily dose (upon relapsing) suffered a self-limitation to an enormous extent, but

also that, upon any attempt obstinately to renew the old doses, there arose a new symptom — viz., an irritation on the surface of the skin — which soon became insupportable, and tended to distraction. In about four years, without any further efforts, my daily ration had fallen *spontaneously* from a varying quantity of eight, ten, or twelve thousand drops of laudanum to about three hundred. I describe the drug as *laudanum*, because another change ran along collaterally with this supreme change — viz., that the solid opium began to require a length of time, continually increasing, to expand its effects sensibly, oftentimes not less than four hours; whereas the tincture manifested its presence instantaneously.

Thus, then, I had reached a position from which authoritatively it might be pronounced, as a result of long, anxious, and vigilant experience, that, on the assumption of earnest (even though intermitting) efforts towards recurrent abstinences on the part of the opium-eater, the practice of indulging to the very greatest excess in this narcotic tends to a natural (almost an inevitable) euthanasia. Many years ago, when briefly touching on this subject, I announced (as a fact even *then* made known to me) that no instance of abstinence, though it were but of three days' continuance, ever perishes. Ten grains, deducted from a daily ration of five hundred, will tell through a series of many weeks, and will be found again modifying the final result, even at the close of the years reckoning. At this day, after a half-century of oscillating experience, and after no efforts or 'rying acts of self-denial beyond those severe ones attached to the several processes (five or six in all) of re-

conquering my freedom from the yoke of opium, I find myself pretty nearly at the same station which I occupied at that vast distance of time. It is recorded of Lord Nelson, that, even after the Nile and Copenhagen, he still paid the penalty, on the first days of resuming his naval life, which is generally exacted by nature from the youngest little midddy or the rawest griffin — viz., sea-sickness. And this happens to a considerable proportion of sailors: they do not recover their sea-legs till some days after getting afloat. The very same thing happens to veteran opium-eaters, when first, after long intermissions, resuming too abruptly their ancient familiarities with opium. It is a fact, which I mention as indicating the enormous revolutions passed through, that within these five years, I have turned pale, and felt warnings, pointing towards such an uneasiness, after taking not more than twenty grains of opium. At present, and for some years, I have been habitually content with five or six grains daily, instead of three hundred and twenty to four hundred grains. Let me wind up this retrospect with saying that the powers of opium, as anodyne, but still more as a tranquillizer of nervous and anomalous sensations, have not in the smallest degree decayed; and that, if it has casually unveiled its early power of exacting slight penalties from any trivial inattention to accurate proportions, it has more than commensurately renewed its ancient privilege of lulling irritation, and of supporting preternatural calls for exertion.

My first proposition, therefore, amounts to this — that the process of weaning one's-self from the deep bondage of opium, by many people viewed with despairing eyes,



is not only a possible achievement, and one which grows easier in every stage of its progress, but is favored and promoted by nature in secret ways that could not, without some experience, have been suspected. This, however, is but a sorry commendation of any resource making great pretensions, that, by a process confessedly trying to human firmness, it can ultimately be thrown aside. Certainly little would be gained by the negative service of cancelling a drawback upon any agency whatever, until it were shown that this drawback has availed to disturb and neutralize great positive blessings lying within the gift of that agency. What are the advantages connected with opium that can merit any such name as blessings?

II. Briefly let me say, in the *second* proposition, that if the reader had, in any South American forest, seen growing rankly some great febrifuge (such as the Jesuits' bark), he would probably have noticed it with slight regard. To understand its value, he must first have suffered from intermittent fever. Bark might strike him as an unnatural stimulant; but, when he came to see that tertian or quartan fever was also an unnatural pressure upon human energies, he would begin to guess that two counter unnaturals may terminate in one most natural and salubrious result. Nervous irritation is the secret desolator of human life; and for this there is probably no adequate controlling power but that of opium, taken daily, under steady regulation.

III. But even more momentous is the burden of my *third* proposition. Are you aware, reader, what it is that constitutes the scourge (physically speaking)

of Great Britain and Ireland? All readers, who direct any part of their attention to medical subjects must know that it is pulmonary consumption. If you walk through a forest at certain seasons, you will see what is called a *blaze* of white paint upon a certain *élite* of the trees marked out by the forester as ripe for the axe. Such a blaze, if the shadowy world could reveal its futurities, would be seen everywhere distributing its secret badges of cognizance amongst our youthful men and women. Of those that, in the expression of Pericles, constitute the vernal section of our population, what a multitudinous crowd would be seen to wear upon their foreheads the same sad ghastly blaze, or some equivalent symbol of dedication to an early grave. How appalling in its amount is this annual slaughter amongst those that should by birthright be specially the children of hope, and levied impartially from *every* rank of society! Is the income-tax or the poor-rate, faithful as each is to its regulating tide-tables, paid by *any* class with as much punctuality as this premature *florilegium*, this gathering and rendering up of blighted blossoms, by *all* classes? Then comes the startling question — that pierces the breaking hearts of so many thousand afflicted relatives — Is there no remedy? Is there no palliation of the evil? Waste not a thought upon the idle question, whether he that speaks is armed with this form or that form of authorization and sanction! Think within yourself how infinite would be the scorn of any poor sorrow-stricken mother, if she — standing over the coffin of her daughter — could believe or could imagine that any vestige of ceremonial scruples, or of fool-born superstitions, or the terror of a word, or old traditional

prejudice, had been allowed to neutralize one chance in a thousand for her daughter — had by possibility (but, as I could tell her, had sometimes to a certainty) stepped between patients and deliverance from the grave, sure and perfect! “What matter,” she would cry out, indignantly, “who it is that says the thing, so long as the thing itself is true?” It is the potent and faithful *word* that is wanted, in perfect slight of the organ through which it is uttered. Let me premise this notorious fact, that all consumption, though latent in the constitution, and indicated often to the eye in bodily conformation, does not therefore manifest itself as a disease, until some form of “cold,” or bronchitis, some familiar affection of the chest or of the lungs, arises to furnish a starting-point for the morbid development.\* Now the one fatal blunder lies in suffering that development to occur; and the one counterworking secret for pre-arrestment of this evil lies in steadily, by whatever means, keeping up and promoting the insensible perspiration. In that one simple art of controlling a constant function of the animal economy, lies a magician’s talisman for defeating the forces leagued against the great organs of respira-

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\* Here is a parallel case, equally fatal where it occurs, but happily moving within a far narrower circle. About fifty years ago, Sir Everard Home, a surgeon of the highest class, mentioned as a dreadful caution, that, within his own experience, many an indolent tumor in the face, not unfrequently the most trifling pimple, which for thirty or more years had caused no uneasiness whatever, suddenly might chance to receive the slightest possible wound from a razor in the act of shaving. What followed? Once disturbed, the trivial excrescence became an open cancer. Is the parallel catastrophe in the pulmonary system, when pushed forward into development, at all less likely to hide its importance from uninstructed eyes? Yet, on the other hand, it is a thousand times more likely to happen.

tion. Pulmonary affections, if not *previously* suffered to develop themselves, cannot live under the hourly counterworking of this magical force. Consequently the one question in arrear is, what potent drug is that which possesses this power, a power like that of "Amram's son," for evoking salubrious streams, welling forth benignly from systems else parched and arid as rocks in the wilderness? There is none that I know of answering the need but opium. The powers of the great agent I first learned dimly to guess at from a remark made to me by a lady in London; then, and for some time previously, she had been hospitably entertaining Coleridge, whom, indeed, she tended with the anxiety of a daughter. Consequently, she was familiarly acquainted with his opium habits; and on my asking, in reply to some remark of hers, how she could be so sure as her words implied, that Coleridge was just then likely to be incapacitated for writing (or, indeed, for any literary *exertion*), she said, "Oh, I know it well by the glistening of his cheeks." Coleridge's face, as is well known to his acquaintances, exposed a large surface of cheek; too large for the intellectual expression of his features generally, had not the final effect been redeemed by what Wordsworth styled his "godlike forehead." The result was, that no possible face so broadly betrayed and published any effects whatever, especially these lustrous effects from excesses in opium. For some years I failed to consider reflectively, or else, reflecting, I failed to decipher, this resplendent acreage of cheek. But at last, either *proprio Marte*, or prompted by some medical hint, I came to understand that the glistening face, glorious from afar like the old Pagan face of the demigod *Æscu-*

lapius, simply reported the gathering accumulations of insensible perspiration. In the very hour, a memorable hour, of making that discovery, I made another. My own history, medically speaking, involved a mystery. At the commencement of my opium career, I had myself been pronounced repeatedly a martyr elect to pulmonary consumption. And although, in the common decencies of humanity, this opinion upon my prospects had always been accompanied with some formal words of encouragement — as, for instance, that constitutions, after all, varied by endless differences; that nobody could fix limits to the powers of medicine, or, in default of medicine, to the healing resources of nature herself; yet, without something like a miracle in my favor, I was instructed to regard myself as a condemned subject. That was the upshot of these agreeable communications; alarming enough; and they were rendered more so by these three facts: first, that the opinions were pronounced by the highest authorities in Christendom — viz., the physicians at Clifton and the Bristol Hotwells, who saw more of pulmonary disorders in one twelve-month than the rest of the profession through all Europe in a century; for the disease, it must be remembered, was almost peculiar as a national scourge to Britain, interlinked with the local accidents of the climate and its restless changes; so that only in England could it be studied; and even there only in perfection at these Bristolian adjacencies — the reason being this, all opulent patients resorted to the Devonshire watering-places, where the balmy temperature of the air and prevailing winds allowed the myrtle and other greenhouse shrubs to stand out-of-doors all winter through; and naturally

on the road to Devonshire all patients alike touched at Clifton. There I was myself continually resident. Many, therefore, and of supreme authority, were the prophets of evil that announced to me my doom. Secondly, they were countenanced by the ugly fact, that I out of eight children was the one who most closely inherited the bodily conformation of a father who died of consumption at the early age of thirty-nine. Thirdly, I offered at the first glance, to a medical eye, every symptom of *phthisis* broadly and conspicuously developed. The hectic colors in the face, the nocturnal perspirations, the growing embarrassments of the respiration, and other expressions of gathering feebleness under any attempts at taking exercise — all these symptoms were steadily accumulating between the age of twenty-two and twenty-four. What was it that first arrested them? Simply the use, continually becoming more regular of opium. Nobody recommended this drug to me; on the contrary, under that ignorant horror which everywhere invested opium, I saw too clearly that any avowed use of it would expose me to a rabid persecution.\* Under the sincere and unaffected hope of saving me from destruction, I should have been hunted into the

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\* "*Rabid persecution:*" — I do not mean that, in the circumstances of my individual position, any opening could have arisen to an opposition more than verbal; since it would have been easy for me at all times to withdraw myself by hundreds of leagues from controversies upon the case. But the reasons for concealment were not the less urgent. For it would have been painful to find myself reduced to the dilemma of either practising habitual and complex dissimulation, or, on the other hand, of throwing myself headlong into that fiery vortex of hotheaded ignorance upon the very name of opium, which to this hour (though with less of rancorous bigotry) makes it hazardous to avow any daily use of so potent a drug.

grave within six months. I kept my own counsel ; said nothing ; awakened no suspicions ; persevered more and more determinately in the use of opium ; and finally effected so absolute a conquest over all pulmonary symptoms, as could not have failed to fix upon me the astonishment of Clifton, had not the sense of wonder been broken by the lingering time consumed in the several stages of the malady, and still more effectually by my own personal withdrawal from Clifton and its neighborhoods.

Finally, arose what will inevitably turn out a more decisive chapter in such a record. I had always fixed my eyes and my expectations upon a revolution in the social history of opium, which could not (as I assured myself) by accident or by art be materially deferred. The great social machinery of life-insurance, supposing no other agency to be brought into play, how would *that* affect the great medicinal interests of opium ? I knew that insurance offices, and the ablest actuaries of such offices, were not less ignorant upon the real merits of the opium question, and (which was worse) not less profoundly *prejudiced*, or less fanatical in their prejudices, than the rest of society. But, then, there were interests, growing continually, which would very soon force them into relaxing these prejudices. It would be alleged, at first, that opium-eating increased the risk of a life-insurance. Waiving the question whether it really *did* increase that risk, in any case that increase of risk, like other risks, could be valued, and *must* be valued. New habits were arising in society : that I well knew. And the old machineries for insuring life interests, under these or any other shifting conditions, would be obliged to adapt themselves to changing circumstances. If the



old offices should be weak enough to persist in their misdirected obstinacy, new ones would arise. Meantime the history of this question moved through the following aspects: Sixteen and seventeen years ago, the offices all looked with horror upon opium-eaters. Thus far, all men must have disapproved the principles of their policy. Habitual brandy-drinkers met with no repulse. And yet alcohol leads into daily dangers—for instance, that of *delirium tremens*. But no man ever heard of opium leading into *delirium tremens*. In the one case, there are well ascertained and notorious dangers besetting the path; but, in the other, supposing any corresponding dangers to exist, they have yet to be discovered. However, the offices would not look at us who came forward avowing ourselves to be opium-eaters. Myself in particular they regarded, I believe, as the abomination of desolation. And fourteen offices in succession, within a few months, repulsed me as a candidate for insurance on that solitary ground of having owned myself to be an opium-eater. The insurance was of very little consequence to myself, though involving some interest to others. And I contented myself with saying, “Ten years hence, gentlemen, you will have come to understand your own interests better.” In less than *seven* years I received a letter from Mr. Tait, surgeon to the Police Force in Edinburgh, reporting a direct investigation officially pursued by him under private instructions received from two or more insurance offices. I knew, at the beginning of these seven years, or had strong reasons for believing, that the habit of opium-eating was spreading extensively, and through classes of society widely disconnected. This diffusion would, beyond a

doubt, as one of its earliest consequences, coerce the insurance offices into a strict revision of their old blind policy. Accordingly it had already done so; and the earliest fruits of this revolution were now before me in the proof-sheets so obligingly transmitted by Mr. Tait. His object, as I understood it, in sending these proofs to myself, was simply to collect such additional notices, suggestions, or skeptical queries, as might reasonably be anticipated from any reflective opium experience so extensive as my own. Most unhappily, this gentleman, during the course of our brief correspondence, was suddenly attacked by typhus fever; and after a short illness, to my own exceeding regret, he died. On all accounts I had reason for sorrow. Knowing him only through his very interesting correspondence with myself, I had learned to form high expectations from Mr. Tait's philosophic spirit and his determined hostility to traditional cant. He had recorded, in the communications made to myself, with great minuteness and anxiety for rigor of accuracy, the cases of more than ninety patients. And he had shown himself inexorably deaf to all attempts at confounding evils specially belonging to opium as a stimulant, as a narcotic, or as poison, with those which belong to opium merely as a cause of constipation or other ordinary irregularities in the animal economy. Most people of sedentary habits, but amongst such people notoriously those who think much, need some slight means of stimulating the watchwork of the animal system into action. Neglect of such means will of course derange the health. But in such derangements there is no special impeachment of opium: many thousands of agents terminate in the same or more obstinate derange-

ments, unless vigilantly counteracted. The paramount mission of Mr. Tait, under his instructions from insurance offices, as I interpreted his own account of this mission, was to report firmly and decisively upon the tendencies of opium in relation to the lengthening or shortening of life. At that point where his proof-sheets were interrupted by the fatal attack of fever, he had not entirely finished his record of cases ; so that his final judgment or summing up had not commenced. It was, however, evident to me in what channel this final judgment would have flowed. To a certainty, he would have authorized his clients (the insurance offices) to dismiss all anxiety as to the life-abridging tendencies of opium. But he would have pointed their jealousy in another direction — viz., this, that in some proportion of cases there may always be a reasonable ground for suspecting, not the opium as separately in itself any cause of mischief, but the opium as a conjectural indication of some secret distress or irritation that had fastened upon the system, and had in that way sought relief ; cases, in short, which the use of opium had not caused, but which, on the contrary, had caused the use of opium ; — opium having been called in to redress or to relieve the affection. In all such circumstances, the insurance office is entitled to call for a frank disclosure of the ailment ; but not, as hitherto, entitled to assume the opium as itself an ailment. It may very easily have happened, that simply the genial restoration derived from opium, its power of qualifying a man suddenly to face (that is, upon an hour's warning to face) some twelve hours' unusual exertion, qualifying him both as to spirits and as to strength ; or again, simply the general purpose of

seeking relief from ennui, or *tædium vitæ* — any one of these motives may satisfactorily account for the applicant's having resorted to opium. He might reply to the office in Professor Wilson's word \* "Gentlemen, I am a *Hedonist*; and if you *must* know why I take opium, that 's the reason why." But still upon every admission from a candidate that he took opium, it would be a prudent question and a just question on the part of the office, to ask "*why*;" and in what circumstances the practice had originated. If any local uneasiness, then would arise a natural right on the part of the office to press for a surgical examination. But, apart from such special cases, it was evident that this acute and experienced surgeon saw no reason whatever in the simple practice of opium-eating for hesitating upon a life-insurance proposal, or for exacting a higher rate of premium.

Here I pause. The reader will infer, from what I have now said, that all passages, written at an earlier period under cloudy and uncorrected views of the evil agencies presumable in opium, stand retracted; although, shrinking from the labor of altering an error diffused so widely under my own early misconceptions of the truth, I have suffered them to remain as they were. My general views upon the powers and natural tendencies of opium were all supported and strengthened by this fortunate advantage of a professional correspondence. My special doctrine I now repeat at this point of valediction, and in a rememberable form. Lord Bacon said once, too boldly and hazardously, that he who

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\* From the Greek word for *voluptuous pleasure* — viz., *Hedone* (ἡδονή) — Professor Wilson coined the English word *Hedonist*, which he sometimes applied in playful reproach to myself and others.

discovers the secret of making myrrh soluble by human blood, has discovered the secret of immortal life. I propose a more modest form of magic — that he who discovers the secret of stimulating and keeping up uninterruptedly the insensible perspiration, has discovered the secret of intercepting pulmonary consumption.

## COLERIDGE AND OPIUM EATING.

WHAT is the deadeſt of things earthly? It is, ſays the world, ever forward and raſh, “a door nail.” But the world is wrong. There is a thing deader than a door nail—viz., Gillman’s Coleridge, vol. i. Dead, more dead, moſt dead is Gillman’s Coleridge, vol. i., and this upon more arguments than one. The book has clearly not completed its elementary act of reſpiration; the *ſyſtole* of vol. i. is abſolutely uſeſs and loſt without the *diaſtole* of that vol. ii. which is never to exiſt. That is one argument; and perhaps this ſecond argument is ſtronger. Gillman’s Coleridge, vol. i., deals raſhly, unjuſtly, and almoſt maliciously with ſome of our own particular friends; and yet, until late in this ſummer, *Anno Domini* 1844, we—that is, neither ourſelves nor our friends—never heard of its exiſtence. Now, a ſloth, even without the benefit of Mr. Waterton’s evidence to his character, will travel faſter than that; but malice, which travels faſteſt of all things, muſt be dead and cold at ſtarting when it can thus have lingered in the rear for ſix years; and therefore, though the world was ſo far right, that people *do* ſay, “Dead as a door nail,” yet henceforward the weakeſt of theſe people

will see the propriety of saying, "Dead as Gillman's Coleridge."

The reader of experience, on sliding over the surface of this opening paragraph, begins to think there's mischief singing in the upper air. No, reader; not at all. We never were cooler in our days. And this we protest, that, were it not for the excellence of the subject, — *Coleridge and Opium Eating*, — Mr. Gillman would have been dismissed by us unnoticed. Indeed, we not only forgive Mr. Gillman, but we have a kindness for him; and on this account, that he was good, he was generous, he was most forbearing, through twenty years, to poor Coleridge, when thrown upon his hospitality. An excellent thing *that*, Mr. Gillman, and one sufficient to blot out a world of libels on ourselves. But still, noticing the theme suggested by this unhappy vol. i., we are forced at times to notice its author. Nor is this to be regretted. We remember a line of Horace never yet properly translated, viz., —

"Nec scutica dignum horribili sectère flagello."

The true translation of which, as we assure the unlearned reader, is, "Nor must you pursue with the horrid knout of Christopher that man who merits only a switching." Very true. We protest against all attempts to invoke the exterminating knout, for *that* sends a man to the hospital for two months; but you see that the same judicious poet, who dissuades an appeal to the knout, indirectly recommends the switch which, indeed, is rather pleasant than otherwise, ami-



ably playful in some of its little caprices, and, in its worst, suggesting only a pennyworth of diachylon.

We begin by professing with hearty sincerity our fervent admiration of the extraordinary man who furnishes the theme for Mr. Gillman's *coup d'essai* in biography. He was, in a literary sense, our brother; for he also was amongst the contributors to *Blackwood*, and will, we presume, take his station in that Blackwood gallery of portraits which in a century hence will possess more interest for intellectual Europe than any merely martial series of portraits, or any gallery of statesmen assembled in congress, except as regards one or two leaders; for defunct major generals and secondary diplomatists, when their date is past, awake no more emotion than last year's advertisements or obsolete directories; whereas those who in a stormy age have swept the harps of passion, of genial wit, or of the wrestling and gladiatorial reason, become more interesting to men when they can no longer be seen as bodily agents than even in the middle chorus of that intellectual music over which, living, they presided.

Of this great camp Coleridge was a leader, and fought amongst the *primipili*; yet comparatively he is still unknown. Heavy, indeed, are the arrears still due to philosophic curiosity on the real merits and on the separate merits of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge as a poet, Coleridge as a philosopher,—how extensive are those questions, if those were all. And upon neither question have we yet any investigation, such as, by compass of views, by research, or

even by earnestness of sympathy with the subject, can or ought to satisfy a philosophic demand. Blind is that man who can persuade himself that the interest in Coleridge, taken as a total object, is becoming an obsolete interest. We are of opinion that even Milton, now viewed from a distance of two centuries, is still inadequately judged or appreciated in his character of poet, of patriot, and partisan, or, finally, in his character of accomplished scholar. But if so, how much less can it be pretended that satisfaction has been rendered to the claims of Coleridge! for upon Milton libraries have been written. There has been time for the malice of men, for the jealousy of men, for the enthusiasm, the scepticism, the adoring admiration of men to expand themselves. There has been room for a Bentley, for an Addison, for a Johnson, for a wicked Lauder, for an avenging Douglas, for an idolizing Chateaubriand; and yet, after all, little enough has been done towards any comprehensive estimate of the mighty being concerned. Piles of materials have been gathered to the ground; but, for the monument which should have risen from these materials, neither the first stone has been laid, nor has a qualified architect yet presented his credentials. On the other hand, upon Coleridge little comparatively has yet been written; whilst the separate characters on which the judgment is awaited are more by one than those which Milton sustained. Coleridge, also, is a poet. Coleridge, also, was mixed up with the fervent politics of his age—an age how memorably reflecting the revolutionary agitations of Milton's age! Coleridge, also, was an extensive and brilliant scholar. What

ever might be the separate proportions of the two men in each particular department of the three here noticed, think as the reader will! upon that point, sure we are that either subject is ample enough to make a strain upon the amplest faculties. How alarming, therefore, for any *honest* critic, who should undertake this later subject of Coleridge, to recollect that, after pursuing him through a zodiac of splendors corresponding to those of Milton in kind, however different in degree, — after weighing him as a poet, as a philosophic politician, as a scholar, — he will have to wheel after him into another orbit — into the unfathomable *nimbus* of transcendental metaphysics! Weigh him the critic must in the golden balance of philosophy the most abstruse, — a balance which even itself requires weighing previously, — or he will have done nothing that can be received for an estimate of the composite Coleridge. This astonishing man, be it again remembered, besides being an exquisite poet, a profound political speculator, a philosophic student of literature through all its chambers and recesses, was also a circumnavigator on the most pathless waters of scholasticism and metaphysics. He had sounded, without guiding charts, the secret deeps of Proclus and Plotinus; he had laid down buoys on the twilight or moonlight ocean of Jacob Boehmen; <sup>50</sup> he had cruised over the broad Atlantic of Kant and Schelling, of Fichte and Oken. Where is the man who shall be equal to these things?

We at least make no such adventurous effort; or if ever we should presume to do so, not at present. Here we design only to make a coasting voyage of survey round the headlands and most conspicuous

remarks of our subject as they are brought forward by Mr. Gillman or collaterally suggested by our own reflections; and especially we wish to say a word or two on Coleridge as an opium eater.

Naturally the first point to which we direct our attention is the history and personal relations of Coleridge. Living with Mr. Gillman for nineteen years as a domesticated friend, Coleridge ought to have been known intimately. And it is reasonable to expect, from so much intercourse, some additions to our slender knowledge of Coleridge's adventures, (if we may use so coarse a word,) and of the secret springs at work in those early struggles of Coleridge at Cambridge, London, Bristol, which have been rudely told to the world, and repeatedly told, as showy romances, but never rationally explained.

The anecdotes, however, which Mr. Gillman has added to the personal history of Coleridge are as little advantageous to the effect of his own book as they are to the interest of the memorable character which he seeks to illustrate. Always they are told without grace, and generally are suspicious in their details. Mr. Gillman we believe to be too upright a man for countenancing any untruth. He has been deceived. For example, will any man believe this? A certain "excellent equestrian," falling in with Coleridge on horseback, thus accosted him: "Pray, sir, did you meet a tailor along the road?" "*A tailor!*" answered Coleridge. "*I did meet a person answering such a description, who told me he had dropped his goose; that, if I rode a little farther, I should find it, And I guess he must have meant you.*" In Joe Miller

this story would read, perhaps, sufferably. Joe has a privilege; and we do not look too narrowly into the mouth of a Joe Millerism; but Mr. Gillman, writing the life of a philosopher, and no jest book, is under a different law of decorum. That retort, however, which silences the jester, it may seem, must be a good one; and we are desired to believe that in this case the baffled assailant rode off in a spirit of benign candor, saying aloud to himself, like the excellent philosopher that he evidently was, "Caught a Tartar!"

But another story of a sporting baronet, who was besides a member of Parliament, is much worse, and altogether degrading to Coleridge. This gentleman, by way of showing off before a party of ladies, is represented as insulting Coleridge by putting questions to him on the qualities of his horse,<sup>51</sup> so as to draw the animal's miserable defects into public notice, and then closing his display by demanding what he would take for the horse, "including the rider." The supposed reply of Coleridge might seem good to those who understand nothing of true dignity; for, as an *impromptu*, it was smart, and even caustic. The baronet, it seems, was reputed to have been bought by the minister; and the reader will at once divine that the retort took advantage of that current belief, so as to throw back the sarcasm, by proclaiming that neither horse nor rider had a price placarded in the market at which any man could become their purchaser. But this was not the temper in which Coleridge either did reply or could have replied. Coleridge showed, in the *spirit* of his manner, a profound sensibility to the nature of a gentleman; and he felt too justly what it became a self

respecting person to say ever to have aped the sort of flashy fencing which might seem fine to a theatrical blood.

Another story is self-refuted. "A hired partisan" had come to one of Coleridge's political lectures with the express purpose of bringing the lecturer into trouble; and most preposterously he laid himself open to his own snare by refusing to pay for admission. Spies must be poor artists who proceed thus. Upon which Coleridge remarked, "that, before the gentleman kicked up a dust, surely he would down with the dust." So far the story will not do. But what follows is possible enough. The *same* "hired" gentleman, by way of giving unity to the tale, is described as having hissed. Upon this a cry arose of "Turn him out!" But Coleridge interfered to protect him. He insisted on the man's right to hiss if he thought fit; it was legal to hiss; it was natural to hiss: "For what is to be expected, gentlemen, when the cool waters of reason come in contact with red-hot aristocracy, but a hiss?" *Euge!*

Amongst all the anecdotes, however, of this splendid man, often trivial, often incoherent, often unauthenticated, there is one which strikes us as both true and interesting; and we are grateful to Mr. Gillman for preserving it. We find it introduced, and partially authenticated, by the following sentence from Coleridge himself: "From eight to fourteen I was a playless daydreamer, a *helluo librorum*, my appetite for which was indulged by a singular incident. A stranger, who was struck by my conversation, made me free of a circulating library in King's Street, Cheapside." The

more circumstantial explanation of Mr. Gillman is this. 'The incident, indeed, was singular. Going down the Strand in one of his daydreams, fancying himself swimming across the Hellespont, thrusting his hands before him as in the act of swimming, his hand came in contact with a gentleman's pocket. The gentleman seized his hand: turning round and looking at him with some anger, — 'What! so young, and yet so wicked?' at the same time accusing him of an attempt to pick his pocket. The frightened boy sobbed out his denial of the intention, and explained to him how he thought himself Leander swimming across the Hellespont. The gentleman was so struck and delighted with the novelty of the thing and with the simplicity and intelligence of the boy that he subscribed, as before stated, to the library; in consequence of which Coleridge was further enabled to indulge his love of reading."

We fear that this slovenly narrative is the very perfection of bad story telling. But the story itself is striking, and, by the very oddness of the incidents, not likely to have been invented. The effect, from the position of the two parties, — on the one side a simple child from Devonshire, dreaming in the Strand that he was swimming over from Sestos to Abydos, and, on the other, the experienced man, dreaming only of this world, its knaves and its thieves, but still kind and generous, — is beautiful and picturesque. *O, si sic omnia!*

But the most interesting to us of the *personalities* connected with Coleridge are his feuds and his personal dislikes. Incomprehensible to us is the war of extermination which Coleridge made upon the political econ



omets. Did Sir James Steuart, in speaking of vine dressers, (not *as* vine dressers, but generally as cultivators,) tell his readers, that, if such a man simply replaced his own consumption, having no surplus whatever or increment for the public capital, he could not be considered a useful citizen, not the beast in the Revelation is held up by Coleridge as more hateful to the spirit of truth than the Jacobite baronet. And yet we know of an author — viz., one S. T. Coleridge — who repeated that same doctrine without finding any evil in it. Look at the first part of the *Wallenstein*, where Count Isolani having said, “Poh! we are *all* his subjects,” *i. e.*, soldiers, (though unproductive laborers,) not less than productive peasants, the emperor’s envoy replies, “Yet with a difference, general;” and the difference implies Sir James’s scale, his vine dresser being the equatorial case between the two extremes of the envoy. Malthus again, in his population book, contends for a mathematic difference between animal and vegetable life in respect to the law of increase; as though the first increased by geometrical ratios, the last by arithmetical! No proposition more worthy of laughter, since both, when permitted to expand, increase by geometrical ratios, and the latter by much higher ratios; whereas Malthus persuaded himself of his crotchet simply by refusing the requisite condition in the vegetable case and granting it in the other. If you take a few grains of wheat, and are required to plant all successive generations of their produce in the same flower pot forever, of course you neutralize its expansion by your own act of arbitrary imitation.<sup>52</sup> But so you would do if you tried the case

of *animal* increase by still exterminating all but one replacing couple of parents. This is not to try, but merely a pretence of trying, one order of powers against another. That was folly. But Coleridge combated this idea in a manner so obscure that nobody understood it. And leaving these speculative conundrums, in coming to the great practical interests afloat in the poor laws, Coleridge did so little real work that he left, as a *res integra*, to Dr. Alison, the capital argument that legal and *adequate* provision for the poor, whether impotent poor or poor accidentally out of work, does not extend pauperism; no; but is the one great resource for putting it down. Dr. Alison's overwhelming and *experimental* manifestations of that truth have prostrated Malthus and his generation forever. This comes of not attending to the Latin maxim, "*Hoc age*," (Mind the object before you.) Dr. Alison, a wise man, "*hoc egit*;" Coleridge "*aliud egit*." And we see the result. In a case which suited him, by interesting his peculiar feeling, Coleridge could command

"Attention full ten times as much as there needs."

But search documents, value evidence, or thresh out bushels of statistical tables, Coleridge could not, any more than he could ride with Elliot's dragoons.

Another instance of Coleridge's inaptitude for such studies as political economy is found in his fancy, by no means "rich and rare," but meagre and trite, that taxes can never injure public prosperity by mere excess of quantity. If they injure, we are to conclude

that it must be by their quality and mode of operation or by their false appropriation, (as, for instance, if they are sent out of the country and spent abroad;) because, says Coleridge, if the taxes are exhaled from the country as vapors, back they come in drenching showers. Twenty pounds ascend in a Scotch mist to the chancellor of the exchequer from Leeds; but does it evaporate? Not at all. By return of post, down comes an order for twenty pounds' worth of Leeds cloth on account of government, seeing that the poor men of the ——th regiment want new gaiters. True; but, of this return twenty pounds, not more than four will be profit — *i. e.*, surplus accruing to the public capital; whereas of the original twenty pounds every shilling was surplus. The same unsound fancy has been many times brought forward, often in England, often in France; but it is curious that its first appearance upon any stage was precisely two centuries ago, when as yet political economy slept with the pre-Adamites — *viz.*, in the Long Parliament. In a quarto volume of the debates during 1644–45, printed as an independent work, will be found the same identical doctrine, supported very sonorously by the same little love of an illustration from the seesaw of mist and rain.

Political economy was not Coleridge's forte. In politics he was happier. In mere personal politics he (like every man, when reviewed from a station distant by forty years) will often appear to have erred; nay, he will be detected and nailed in error. But this is the necessity of us all. Keen are the refutations of time; and absolute results to posterity are the fatal touchstone of opinions in the past. It is undeniable,

besides, that Coleridge had strong personal antipathies for instance, to Messrs. Pitt and Dundas. Yet *why* we never could understand. We once heard him tell a story upon Windermere to the late Mr. Curwen then M. P. for Workington, which was meant apparently to account for this feeling. The story amounted to this, that, when a freshman at Cambridge, Mr. Pitt had wantonly amused himself at a dinner party, in Trinity, in smashing with filberts (discharged in showers like grape shot) a most costly dessert set of cut glass; from which Samuel Taylor Coleridge argued a principle of destructiveness in his *cerebellum*. Now, if this dessert set belonged to some poor suffering Trinitarian, and not to himself, we are of opinion that he was faulty, and ought, upon his own great subsequent maxim, to have been coerced into "indemnity for the past and security for the future." But, besides that this glassy *mythus* belongs to an era fifteen years earlier than Coleridge's, so as to justify a shadow of scepticism, we really cannot find in such an *escapade* under the boiling blood of youth any sufficient justification of that withering malignity towards the name of Pitt which runs through Coleridge's famous *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*. As this little viperous *jeu d'esprit* (published anonymously) subsequently became the subject of a celebrated after-dinner discussion in London at which Coleridge (*comme de raison*) was the chief speaker, the reader of this generation may wish to know the question at issue; and, in order to judge of *that*, he must know the outline of this devil's squib. The writer brings upon the scene three pleasant young ladies — viz., Miss Fire, Miss

Famine, and Miss Slaughter. "What are you up to? What's the row?" we may suppose to be the introductory question of the poet. And the answer of the ladies makes us aware that they are fresh from larking in Ireland and in France. A glorious spree they had; lots of fun, and laughter *à discretion*. At all times *gratus puellæ risus ab angulo*; so that we listen to their little gossip with interest. They had been setting men, it seems, by the ears; and the drollest little atrocities they do certainly report. Not but we have seen better in the *Nenagh* paper, so far as Ireland is concerned; but the pet little joke was in *La Vendée*. Miss Famine, who is the girl for our money, raises the question, whether any of them can tell the name of the leader and prompter to these high jinks of hell; if so, let her whisper it.

"Whisper it, sister, so and so,  
In a dark hint, distinct and low."

Upon which the playful Miss Slaughter replies, —

"Letters *four* do form his name.

\* \* \* \* \*  
He came by stealth and unlocked my den;  
And I have drunk the blood since then  
Of thrice three hundred thousand men."

Good; but the sting of the hornet lies in the conclusion. If this quadriliteral man had done so much for *them*, (though, really, we think *6s. 8d.* might have settled his claim.) what, says Fire, setting her arms akimbo, would they do for *him*? Slaughter replies, rather crustily, that, as far as a good kicking would go, or (says Famine) a little matter of tearing to pieces by the mob,

they would be glad to take tickets at his benefit  
 ‘How, you bitches!’ says Fire. “Is that all?”

“I alone am faithful; I  
 Cling to him everlastingly.”

The sentiment is diabolical; and the question argued at the London dinner table was, Could the writer have been other than a devil? The dinner was at the late excellent Mr. Sotheby’s, known advantageously in those days as the translator of Wieland’s *Oberon*. Several of the great guns amongst the literary body were present — in particular, Sir Walter Scott; and he, we believe, with his usual good nature, took the apologetic side of the dispute; in fact, he was in the secret. Nobody else, barring the author, knew at first whose good name was at stake. The scene must have been high. The company kicked about the poor diabolic writer’s head as if it had been a tennis ball. Coleridge, the yet unknown criminal, absolutely perspired and fumed in pleading for the defendant; the company demurred; the orator grew urgent; wits began to *smoke* the case, as active verbs — the advocate to *smoke*, as a neuter verb; the “fun grew fast and furious;” until at length *delinquent arose*, burning tears in his eyes, and confessed to an audience, (now bursting with stifled laughter, but whom he supposed to be bursting with fiery indignation,) “Lo, I am he that wrote it!”

For our own part, we side with Coleridge. Malice is not always of the heart; there is a malice of the understanding and the fancy. Neither do we think the worse of a man for having invented the most horrible and old woman troubling curse that demmons ever

listened to. We are too apt to swear horribly ourselves; and often have we frightened the cat — to say nothing of the kettle — by our shocking (far too shocking) oaths.

There were other celebrated men whom Coleridge detested, or seemed to detest — Paley, Sir Sidney Smith, Lord Hutchinson, (the last Lord Donoughmore,) and Cuvier. To Paley it might seem as if his antipathy had been purely philosophic; but we believe that partly it was personal; and it tallies with this belief, that, in his earliest political tracts, Coleridge charged the archdeacon repeatedly with his own joke, as if it had been a serious saying — viz., “that he could not afford to keep a conscience;” such luxuries, like a carriage for instance, being obviously beyond the finances of poor men.

With respect to the philosophic question between the parties as to the grounds of moral election, we hope it is no treason to suggest that both were perhaps in error. Against Paley, it occurs at once that he himself would not have made consequences the *practical* test in valuing the morality of an act, since these can very seldom be traced at all up to the final stages, and in the earliest stages are exceedingly different under different circumstances; so that the same act, tried by its consequences, would bear a fluctuating appreciation. This could not have been Paley’s *revised* meaning; consequently, had he been pressed by opposition, it would have come out that by *test* he meant only *speculative* test — a very harmless doctrine, certainly, but useless and impertinent to any purpose of his system. The reader may catch our meaning in the following illus



tration. It is a matter of general belief that happiness, upon the whole, follows in a higher degree from constant integrity than from the closest attention to self-interest. Now, happiness is one of those consequences which Paley meant by final or remotest; but we could never use this idea as an exponent of integrity or interchangeable criterion, because happiness cannot be ascertained or appreciated except upon long tracts of time, whereas the particular act of integrity depends continually upon the election of the moment. No man, therefore, could venture to lay down as a rule, Do what makes you happy; use this as your test of actions, satisfied that in that case always you will do the thing which is right; for he cannot discern independently what *will* make him happy; and he must decide on the spot. The use of the *nexus* between morality and happiness must, therefore, be inverted; it is not practical or prospective, but simply retrospective; and in that form it says no more than the good old rules hallowed in every cottage. But this furnishes no practical guide for moral election which a man had not before he ever thought of this *nexus*. In the sense in which it is true, we need not go to the professor's chair for this maxim; in the sense in which it would serve Paley, it is absolutely false.

On the other hand, as against Coleridge, it is certain that many acts could be mentioned which are judged to be good or bad only because their consequences are known to be so, whilst the great catholic acts of life are entirely (and, if we may so phrase it, haughtily) independent of consequences. For instance, fidelity to a trust is a law of immutable morality

subject to no casuistry whatever. You have been left executor to a friend; you are to pay over his last legacy to X, though a dissolute scoundrel; and you are to give no shilling of it to the poor brother of X, though a good man and a wise man, struggling with adversity. You are absolutely excluded from all contemplation of results. It was your deceased friend's right to make the will; it is yours simply to see it executed. Now, in opposition to this primary class of actions stands another, such as the habit of intoxication, which is known to be wrong only by observing the consequences. If drunkenness did not terminate, after some years, in producing bodily weakness, irritability in the temper, and so forth, it would *not* be a vicious act; and accordingly, if a transcendent motive should arise in favor of drunkenness, as that it would enable you to face a degree of cold or contagion else menacing to life, a duty would arise, *pro hac vice*, of getting drunk. We had an amiable friend who suffered under the infirmity of cowardice; an awful coward he was when sober; but, when very drunk, he had courage enough for the Seven Champions of Christendom. Therefore in an emergency, where he knew himself suddenly loaded with the responsibility of defending a family, we approved highly of his getting drunk. But to violate a trust could never become right under any change of circumstances. Coleridge, however, altogether overlooked this distinction; which on the other hand, stirring in Patey's mind, but never brought out to distinct consciousness, nor ever investigated, nor limited, has undermined his system. Perhaps it is not very important how a man *theorizes* upon morality.

happily for us all, God has left no man in such questions practically to the guidance of his understanding ; but still, considering that academic bodies *are* partly instituted for the support of speculative truth as well as truth practical, we must think it a blot upon the splendor of Oxford and Cambridge that both of them, in a Christian land, make Paley the foundation of their ethics, the alternative being Aristotle. And in our mind, though far inferior as a moralist to the Stoics Aristotle is often less of a pagan than Paley.

Coleridge's dislike to Sir Sidney Smith and the Egyptian Lord Hutchinson fell under the category of Martial's case : —

“ Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare ;  
Hoc solum novi — non amo te, Sabidi.”

Against Lord Hutchinson we never heard him plead any thing of moment except that he was finically Frenchified in his diction ; of which he gave this instance : that having occasion to notice a brick wall (which was literally *that*, not more and not less,) when reconnoitring the French defences, he called it a *revêtement*. And we ourselves remember his using the French word *gloriole* rather ostentatiously — that is, when no particular emphasis attached to the case. But every man has his foibles ; and few, perhaps, are less conspicuously annoying than this of Lord Hutchinson. Sir Sidney's crimes were less distinctly recalled to our mind. As to Cuvier, Coleridge's hatred of *him* was more to our taste ; for (though quite unreasonable, we fear) it took the shape of patriotism. He insisted on it that our British John Hunter was the gen-

vine article, and that Cuvier was a humbug. Now speaking privately to the public, we cannot go quite so far as *that*; but, when publicly we address that most respectable character, *en grand costume*, we always mean to back Coleridge; for we are a horrible John Bull ourselves. As Joseph Hume observes, it makes no difference to us — right or wrong, black or white — when our countrymen are concerned; and John Hunter, notwithstanding he had a bee in his bonnet,<sup>53</sup> was really a great man; though it will not follow that Cuvier must therefore have been a little one. We do not pretend to be acquainted with the tenth part of Cuvier's performances; but we suspect that Coleridge's range in that respect was not much greater than our own.

Other cases of monomaniac antipathy we might revive from our recollections of Coleridge had we a sufficient motive; but in compensation, and by way of redressing the balance, he had many strange likings, — equally monomaniac, — and, unaccountably, he chose to exhibit his whimsical partialities by dressing up, as it were, in his own clothes such a set of scarecrows as eye has not beheld. Heavens! what an ark of unclean beasts would have been Coleridge's private *menagerie* of departed philosophers could they all have been trotted out in succession! But did the reader feel them to be the awful bores which, in fact, they were? No — because Coleridge had blown upon these withered anatomies, through the blowpipe of his own creative genius, a stream of gas that swelled the tissue of their antediluvian wrinkles, forced color upon their cheeks and splendor upon their sodden eyes. Such a process of ventriloquism never *has* existed. He spoke by their

organs; they were the tubes; and he forced through their wooden machinery his own Beethoven harmonies.

First came Dr. Andrew Bell. We knew him. Was he dull? Is a wooden spoon dull? Fishy were his eyes; torpedinous was his manner; and his main idea, out of two which he really had, related to the moon — from which you infer, perhaps, that he was lunatic. By no means. It was no craze, under the influence of the moon, which possessed him; it was an idea of mere hostility to the moon. The Madras people, like many others, had an idea that she influenced the weather. Subsequently the Herschels, senior and junior, systematized this idea; and then the wrath of Andrew, previously in a crescent state, actually dilated to a pleuilunar orb. The Westmoreland people (for at the lakes it was we knew him) expounded his condition to us by saying that he was “muffled;” which word means “perplexed in the extreme.” His wrath did not pass into lunacy; it produced simple distraction; an uneasy fumbling with the idea — like that of an old superannuated dog who longs to worry, but cannot for want of teeth. In this condition you will judge that he was rather tedious; and in this condition Coleridge took him up. Andrew’s other idea, because he *had* two, related to education. Perhaps six sevenths of that also came from Madras. No matter; Coleridge took *that* up; Southey also; but Southey with his usual temperate fervor. Coleridge, on the other hand, found celestial marvels both in the scheme and in the man. Then commenced the apotheosis of Andrew Bell; and because it happened that his opponent, Lancaster, between ourselves, really *had* stolen his ideas from Bell,

what between the sad wickedness of Lancaster and the celestial transfiguration of Bell, gradually Coleridge heated himself to such an extent that people, when referring to that subject, asked each other, "Have you heard Coleridge lecture on *Bel and the Dragon*?"

The next man glorified by Coleridge was John Woolman, the Quaker. Him, though we once possessed his works, it cannot be truly affirmed that we ever read. Try to read John we often did; but read John we did not. This, however, you say, might be our fault, and not John's. Very likely; and we have a notion that now, with our wiser thoughts, we *should* read John if he were here on this table. It is certain that he was a good man, and one of the earliest in America, if not in Christendom, who lifted up his hand to protest against the slave trade; but still we suspect that, had John been all that Coleridge represented, he would not have repelled us from reading his travels in the fearful way that he did. But again we beg pardon, and entreat the earth of Virginia to lie light upon the remains of John Woolman; for he was an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile.

The third person raised to divine honors by Coleridge was Bowyer, the master of Christ's Hospital, London — a man whose name rises into the nostrils of all who knew him with the gracious odor of a tallow chandler's melting house upon melting day, and whose memory is embalmed in the hearty detestation of all his pupils. Coleridge describes this man as a profound critic. Our idea of him is different. We are of opinion that Bowyer was the greatest villain of the eighteenth century. We may be wrong; but we can-

not be *far* wrong. Talk of knouting indeed ! which we did at the beginning of this paper in the mere playfulness of our hearts, — and which the great master of the knout, Christopher, who visited men's trespasses like the Eumenides, never resorted to but in love for some great idea which had been outraged, — why, this man knouted his way through life, from bloody youth up to truculent old age. Grim idol ! whose altars reeked with children's blood, and whose dreadful eyes never smiled except as the stern goddess of the Thugs smiles when the sound of human lamentations inhabits her ears. So much had the monster fed upon this great idea of "flogging," and transmuted it into the very nutriment of his heart, that he seems to have conceived the gigantic project of flogging all mankind ; nay, worse ; for Mr. Gillman, on Coleridge's authority, tells us (p. 24) the following anecdote : —

" ' *Sirrah, I'll flog you,*' were words so familiar to him, that on one occasion some *female* friend of one of the boys " (who had come on an errand of intercession) " still lingering at the door, after having been abruptly told to go, Bowyer exclaimed, 'Bring that woman here, and I'll flog her.' "

To this horrid incarnation of whips and scourges, Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, ascribes ideas upon criticism and taste which every man will recognize as the intense peculiarities of Coleridge. Could these notions really have belonged to Bowyer, then how do we know but he wrote the *Ancient Mariner* ? Yet, on consideration, no ; for even Coleridge admitted that, spite of his fine theorizing upon composition, Mr. Bowyer did not prosper in the practice — of



which he gave us this illustration; and, as it is supposed to be the only specimen of the Bowyeriana which now survives in this sublunary world, we are glad to extend its glory. It is the most curious example extant of the melodious in sound:—

“’Twas thou that smooth’d’st the rough-rugg’d bed of pain.”

“Smooth’d’st!” Would the teeth of a crocodile not splinter under that word? It seems to us as if Mr. Bowyer’s verses ought to be boiled before they can be read. And when he says, *’Twas thou*, what is the wretch talking to? Can he be apostrophizing the knout? We very much fear it. If so, then, you see, (reader,) that, even when incapacitated by illness from operating, he still adores the image of his holy scourge, and invokes it as alone able to smooth “his rough-rugg’d bed.” O thou infernal Bowyer! upon whom even Trollope (*History of Christ’s Hospital*) charges “a discipline *tinctured* with more than due severity,” can there be any partners found for thee in a quadrille except Draco, the bloody lawgiver, Bishop Bonner, and Mrs. Brownrigg?<sup>54</sup>

The next pet was Sir Alexander Ball. Concerning Bowyer Coleridge did not talk much, but chiefly wrote; concerning Bell he did not write much, but chiefly talked; concerning Ball, however, he both wrote and talked. It was in vain to muse upon any plan for having Ball blackballed or for rebelling against Bell. Think of a man who had fallen into one pit called Bell; secondly, falling into another pit

called Ball. This was too much. We were obliged to quote poetry against them: —

“Letters four do form his name.  
He came by stealth and unlocked my den;  
And the nightmare I have felt since then  
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.”

Not that we insinuate any disrespect to Sir Alexander Ball. He was about the foremost, we believe, in all good qualities, amongst Nelson's admirable captains at the Nile. He commanded a seventy-four most effectually in that battle; he governed Malta as well as Sancho governed Barataria; and he was a true practical philosopher — as, indeed, was Sancho. But still, by all that we could ever learn, Sir Alexander had no taste for the abstract upon any subject, and would have read as mere delirious wanderings those philosophic opinions which Coleridge fastened like wings upon his respectable but astounded shoulders.

We really beg pardon for having laughed a little at these crazes of Coleridge; but laugh we did, of mere necessity, in those days, at Bell and Ball, whenever we did not groan. And, as the same precise alternative offered itself now, — viz., that, in recalling the case, we must reverberate either the groaning or the laughter, — we presumed the reader would vote for the last. Coleridge, we are well convinced, owed all these wandering and exaggerated estimates of men — these diseased impulses, that, like the *mirage*, showed lakes and fountains where in reality there were only arid deserts — to the derangements worked by opium

But now, for the sake of change, let us pass to another topic. Suppose we say a word or two on Coleridge's accomplishments as a scholar. We are not going to enter on so large a field as that of his scholarship in connection with his philosophic labors — scholarship in the result; not this, but scholarship in the means and machinery, range of *verbal* scholarship, is what we propose for a moment's review.

For instance, what sort of a German scholar was Coleridge? We dare say that, because in his version of the *Wallenstein* there are some inaccuracies, those who may have noticed them will hold him cheap in this particular pretension. But, to a certain degree, they will be wrong. Coleridge was not *very* accurate in any thing but in the use of logic. All his philological attainments were imperfect. He did not talk German; or so obscurely, — and, if he attempted to speak fast, so erroneously, — that in his second sentence, when conversing with a German lady of rank, he contrived to assure her that in his humble opinion she was a ——. Hard it is to fill up the hiatus decorously; but, in fact, the word very coarsely expressed that she was no better than she should be. Which reminds us of a parallel misadventure to a German, whose colloquial English had been equally neglected. Having obtained an interview with an English lady, he opened his business (whatever it might be) thus: "Highborn madam, since your husband have kicked de bucket ——" "Sir!" interrupted the lady, astonished and displeased. "O, pardon! — nine, ten thousand pardon! Now I make new beginning — quite oder beginning. Madam, since

your husband have cut his stick ——” It may be supposed that this did not mend matters; and, reading that in the lady’s countenance, the German drew out an octavo dictionary, and said, perspiring with shame at having a second time missed fire, “Madam, since your husband have gone to kingdom come ——” This he said besecchingly; but the lady was past propitiation by this time, and rapidly moved towards the door. Things had now reached a crisis; and, if something were not done quickly, the game was up. Now, therefore, taking a last hurried look at his dictionary, the German flew after the lady, crying out, in a voice of despair, “Madam, since your husband, your most respected husband, have hopped de twig ——”<sup>55</sup> This was his sheet anchor; and, as this also *came home*, of course the poor man was totally wrecked. It turned out that the dictionary he had used — (Arnold’s, we think) — a work of a hundred years back, and, from mere ignorance, giving slang translations from Tom Brown, L’Estrange, and other jocular writers — had put down the verb *sterben* (*to die*) with the following worshipful series of equivalents: 1. To kick the bucket; 2. To cut one’s stick; 3. To go to kingdom come; 4. To hop the twig.

But, though Coleridge did not pretend to any fluent command of conversational German, he read it with great ease. His knowledge of German literature was, indeed, too much limited by his rare opportunities for commanding any thing like a well-mounted library. And particularly it surprised us that Coleridge knew little or nothing of John Paul (Richter.) But his acquaintance with the German philosophic masters

was extensive; and his valuation of many individual German words or phrases was delicate, and sometimes profound.

As a Grecian, Coleridge must be estimated with a reference to the state and standard of Greek literature at that time and in this country. Porson had not yet raised our ideal. The earliest laurels of Coleridge were gathered, however, in that field. Yet no man will, at this day, pretend that the Greek of his prize ode is sufferable. Neither did Coleridge ever become an accurate Grecian in later times, when better models of scholarship and better aids to scholarship had begun to multiply. But still we must assert this point of superiority for Coleridge, that, whilst he never was what may be called a well-mounted scholar in any department of verbal scholarship, he yet displayed sometimes a brilliancy of conjectural sagacity and a felicity of philosophic investigation, even in this path, such as better scholars do not often attain, and of a kind which cannot be learned from books. But, as respects his accuracy, again we must recall to the reader the state of Greek literature in England during Coleridge's youth; and in all equity, as a means of placing Coleridge in the balances, specifically we must recall the state of Greek metrical composition at that period.

To measure the condition of Greek literature even in Cambridge, about the initial period of Coleridge, we need only look back to the several translations of Gray's *Elegy* by three (if not four) of the reverend gentlemen at that time attached to Eton College. Mathias, no very great scholar himself in this particu

lar field, made himself merry, in his *Pursuits of Literature*, with these Eton translations. In that he was right. But he was *not* right in praising a contemporary translation by Cook, who (we believe) was the immediate predecessor of Porson in the Greek chair. As a specimen of this translation,<sup>56</sup> we cite one stanza; and we cannot be supposed to select unfairly, because it is the stanza which Mathias praises in extravagant terms. "Here," says he, "Gray, Cook, and Nature do seem to contend for the mastery." The English quatrain must be familiar to every body:—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth, e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

And the following, we believe, though quoting from a thirty-three years' recollection of it, is the exact Greek version of Cook:—

'Αχαρις ἐγγενεων, χαρις ἃ βασιληιδος ἀρχας,  
Δωρα τυχης χρυσεης,<sup>57</sup> Ἀφοδιτης καλα τα δωρα,  
Πανθ' ἅμα ταυτα τεθνηκε, και ειδεν μορσιμον ἅμαρ·  
'Ηρωων κλε' ὀλωλε, και ὤχετο ξινον ἐς Ἀδην.

Now, really, these verses, by force of a little mosaic tessellation from genuine Greek sources, pass fluently over the tongue; but can they be considered other than a *cento*? Swarms of English schoolboys at this day would not feel very proud to adopt them. In fact, we remember (at a period say twelve years later than this) some iambic verses, which were really composed by a boy—viz., a son of Dr. Prettyman, (after

wards Tomline,) Bishop of Winchester, and, in earlier times, private tutor to Mr. Pitt. They were published by Middleton, first bishop of Calcutta, in the preface to his work on the Greek article; and, for racy idiomatic Greek, self-originated, and not a mere mocking bird's iteration of alien notes, are so much superior to all the attempts of these sexagenarian doctors as distinctly to mark the growth of a new era and a new generation in this difficult accomplishment within the first decennium of this century. It is singular that only one blemish is suggested by any of the contemporary critics in Dr. Cook's verses—viz., in the word ξυρον for which this critic proposes to substitute ωιρον, to prevent, as he observes, the last syllable of ωχετο from being lengthened by the ξ. Such considerations as these are necessary to the *trutina castigatio* before we can value Coleridge's place on the scale of his own day; which day, *quoad hoc*, be it remembered, was 1790.

As to French, Coleridge read it with too little freedom to find pleasure in French literature. Accordingly we never recollect his referring for any purpose, either of argument or illustration, to a French classic. Latin, from his regular scholastic training, naturally he read with a scholar's fluency; and indeed he read constantly in authors such as Petrarch, Erasmus, Calvin, &c., whom he could not then have found in translations. But Coleridge had not cultivated an acquaintance with the delicacies of classic Latinity. And it is remarkable that Wordsworth, educated most negligently at Hawkshead school, subsequently, by reading the lyric poetry of Horace, smoly for his own delight



as a student of composition, made himself a master of Latinity in its most difficult form; whilst Coleridge trained regularly in a great southern school, never carried his Latin to any classical polish.

There is another accomplishment of Coleridge's less broadly open to the judgment of this generation, and not at all of the next — viz., his splendid art of conversation, on which it will be interesting to say a word. Ten years ago, when the music of this rare performance had not yet ceased to vibrate in men's ears, what a sensation was gathering amongst the educated classes on this particular subject! What a tumult of anxiety prevailed to "hear Mr. Coleridge," or even to talk with a man who *had* heard him. Had he lived till this day, not Paganini would have been so much sought after. That sensation is now decaying, because a new generation has emerged during the ten years since his death. But many still remain whose sympathy (whether of curiosity in those who did *not* know him or of admiration in those who *did*) still reflects as in a mirror the great stir upon this subject which then was moving in the world. To these, if they should inquire for the great distinguishing principle of Coleridge's conversation, we might say that it was the power of vast combination "in linked sweetness long drawn out." He gathered into focal concentration the largest body of objects, *apparently* disconnected, that any man ever yet, by any magic, could assemble, or, *having* assembled, could manage. His great fault was, that, by not opening sufficient spaces for reply, or suggestion, or collateral notice, he not only narrowed his own field, but he grievously injured the final im-

pression. For when men's minds are purely passive, when they are not allowed to react, then it is that they collapse most, and that their sense of what is said must ever be feeblest. Doubtless there must have been great conversational masters elsewhere, and at many periods; but in this lay Coleridge's characteristic advantage, that he was a great natural power, and also a great artist. He was a power in the art; and he carried a new art into the power.

But now, finally, — having left ourselves little room for more, — one or two words on Coleridge as an opium eater.

We have not often read a sentence falling from a wise man with astonishment so profound as that particular one in a letter of Coleridge's<sup>58</sup> to Mr. Gillman which speaks of the effort to wean one's self from opium as a trivial task. There are, we believe, several such passages; but we refer to that one in particular which assumes that a single "week" will suffice for the whole process of so mighty a revolution. Is, indeed, Leviathan so tamed? In that case, the quarantine of the opium eater might be finished within Coleridge's time and with Coleridge's romantic ease. But mark the contradictions of this extraordinary man. Not long ago we were domesticated with a venerable rustic, strongheaded, but incurably obstinate in his prejudices, who treated the whole body of medical men as ignorant pretenders, knowing absolutely nothing of the system which they professed to superintend. This, you will remark, is no very singular case. No; nor, as we believe, is the antagonist case of ascribing to such men magical powers. Nor, what is worse still, the

coexistence of both cases in the same mind, as in fact happened here ; for this same obstinate friend of ours who treated all medical pretensions as the mere jest of the universe, every third day was exacting from his own medical attendants some exquisite *tour de force*, as that they should know or should do something, which, if they *had* known or done, all men would have suspected them reasonably of magic. He rated the whole medical body as infants ; and yet what he exacted from them every third day, as a matter of course, virtually presumed them to be the only giants within the whole range of science. Parallel and equal is the contradiction of Coleridge. He speaks of opium excess — his own excess we mean — the excess of twenty-five years — as a thing to be laid aside easily and forever within seven days ; and yet, on the other hand, he describes it pathetically, sometimes with a frantic pathos, as the scourge, the curse, the one almighty blight which had desolated his life.

This shocking contradiction we need not press. All readers will see *that*. But some will ask, Was Mr. Coleridge right in either view ? Being so atrociously wrong in the first notion, (*viz.*, that the opium of twenty-five years was a thing easily to be forsworn,) where a child could know that he was wrong, was he even altogether right, secondly, in believing that his own life, root and branch, had been withered by opium ? For it will not follow, because, with a relation to happiness and tranquillity, a man may have found opium his curse, that therefore, as a creature of energies and great purposes, he must have been the wreck which he seems to suppose. Opium gives and

takes away. It defeats the *steady* habit of exertion ; but it creates spasms of irregular exertion. It ruins the natural power of life ; but it develops preternatural paroxysms of intermitting power.

Let us ask of any man who holds that not Coleridge himself, but the world, as interested in Coleridge's usefulness, has suffered by his addiction to opium, whether he is aware of the way in which opium affected Coleridge ; and, secondly, whether he is aware of the actual contributions to literature—how large they were—which Coleridge made *in spite* of opium. All who were intimate with Coleridge must remember the fits of genial animation which were created continually in his manner and in his buoyancy of thought by a recent or by an *extra* dose of the omnipotent drug. A lady, who knew nothing experimentally of opium, once told us that she “could tell when Mr. Coleridge had taken too much opium by his shining countenance.” She was right : we know that mark of opium excesses well and the cause of it ; or at least we believe the cause to lie in the quickening of the insensible perspiration which accumulates and glistens on the face. Be that as it may, a criterion it was that could not deceive us as to the condition of Coleridge. And uniformly in that condition he made his most effective intellectual displays. It is true that he might not be happy under this fiery animation ; and we fully believe that he was not. Nobody is happy under laudanum except for a very short term of years. But in what way did that operate upon his exertions as a writer ? We are of opinion that it killed Coleridge as a poet. “The harp

of Quantock" was silenced forever by the torment of opium; but proportionably it roused and stung by misery his metaphysical instincts into more spasmodic life. Poetry can flourish only in the atmosphere of happiness. But subtle and perplexed investigations of difficult problems are amongst the commonest resources for beguiling the sense of misery. And for this we have the direct authority of Coleridge himself speculating on his own case. In the beautiful though unequal ode entitled *Dejection*, stanza six, occurs the following passage: —

"For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
But to be still and patient all I can,  
*And haply by abstruse research to steal*  
*From my own nature all the natural man,—*  
This was my sole resource, my only plan;  
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul."

Considering the exquisite quality of some poems which Coleridge has composed, nobody can grieve (or *has* grieved) more than ourselves at seeing so beautiful a fountain choked up with weeds. But, had Coleridge been a happier man, it is our fixed belief that we should have had far less of his philosophy, and perhaps, but not certainly, might have had more of his general literature. In the estimate of the public, *that* will seem a bad exchange. Every man to his taste. Meantime, what we wish to show is, that the loss was not absolute, but merely relative.

it is urged, however, that, even on his philosophic

speculations, opium operated unfavorably in one respect, by often causing him to leave them unfinished. This is true. Whenever Coleridge (being highly charged, or saturated, with opium) had written with distempered vigor upon any question, there occurred soon after a recoil of intense disgust, not from his own paper only, but even from the subject. All opium eaters are tainted with the infirmity of leaving works unfinished and suffering reactions of disgust; but Coleridge taxed himself with that infirmity in verse before he could at all have commenced opium eating. Besides, it is too much assumed by Coleridge and by his biographer that to leave off opium was of course to regain juvenile health. But all opium eaters make the mistake of supposing every pain or irritation which they suffer to be the product of opium; whereas a wise man will say, Suppose you *do* leave off opium, that will not deliver you from the load of years (say sixty-three) which you carry on your back. Charles Lamb, another man of true genius, and another head belonging to the Blackwood Gallery, made that mistake in his *Confessions of a Drunkard*. "I looked back," says he, "to the time when always, on waking in the morning, I had a song rising to my lips." At present, it seems, being a drunkard, he has no such song. Ay, dear Lamb, but note this, that the drunkard was fifty-six years old, the songster was twenty-three. Take twenty-three from fifty-six, and we have some reason to believe that thirty-three will remain which period of thirty-three years is a pretty good reason for not singing in the morning, even if brandy has been out of the question.

It is singular, as respects Coleridge, that Mr. Gillman never says one word upon the event of the great Highgate experiment for leaving off laudanum, though Coleridge came to Mr. Gillman's for no other purpose; and in a week, this vast creation of new earth, sea, and all that in them is, was to have been accomplished. We *rayther* think, as Bayley junior observes, that the explosion must have hung fire. But *that* is a trifle. We have another pleasing hypothesis on the subject. Mr. Wordsworth, in his exquisite lines written on a flyleaf of his own *Castle of Indolence*, having described Coleridge as "a noticeable man with large gray eyes," goes on to say, "He" (*viz.*, Coleridge) "did that other man entice" to view his imagery. Now, we are sadly afraid that "the noticeable man with large gray eyes" did entice "that other man," *viz.*, Gillman, to commence opium eating. This is droll; and it makes us laugh horribly. Gillman should have reformed *him*; and lo, *he* corrupts Gillman! S. T. Coleridge visited Highgate by way of being converted from the heresy of opium; and the issue is, that in two months' time various grave men, amongst whom our friend Gillman marches first in great pomp, are found to have faces shining and glorious as that of *Æsculapius* — a fact of which we have already explained the secret meaning. And scandal says (but then, what will not scandal say?) that a hogshead of opium goes up daily through Highgate tunnel. Surely one corroboration of our hypothesis may be found in the fact that vol. i. of Gillman's Coleridge is forever to stand unpropped by vol. ii.; for we have already observed that opium



eaters, though good fellows upon the whole, never finish any thing.

What then? A man has a right never to finish any thing. Certainly he has, and by *Magna Charta*; but he has no right, by *Magna Charta* or by *Parva Charta*, to slander decent men like ourselves and our friend the author of the *Opium Confessions*. Here it is that our complaint arises against Mr. Gillman. If he has taken to opium eating, can we help *that*? If *his* face shines, must our faces be blackened? He has very improperly published some intemperate passages<sup>50</sup> from Coleridge's letters which ought to have been considered confidential, unless Coleridge had left them for publication, charging upon the author of the *Opium Confessions* a reckless disregard of the temptations which in that work he was scattering abroad amongst men. Now, this author is connected with ourselves; and we cannot neglect his defence, unless in the case that he undertakes it himself.

We complain also that Coleridge raises (and is backed by Mr. Gillman in raising) a distinction, perfectly perplexing to us, between himself and the author of the *Opium Confessions* upon the question, why they severally began the practice of opium eating. In himself, it seems, this motive was to relieve pain; whereas the confessor was surreptitiously seeking for pleasure. Ay, indeed, where did he learn *that*? We have no copy of the *Confessions* here, so we cannot quote chapter and verse; but we distinctly remember that toothache is recorded in that book as the particular occasion which first introduced

the author to the knowledge of opium. Whether afterwards, having been thus initiated by the demon of pain, the opium confessor did not apply powers thus discovered to purposes of mere pleasure, is a question for himself; and the same question applies with the same cogency to Coleridge. Coleridge began in rheumatic pains. What then? This is no proof that he did not end in voluptuousness. For our part, we are slow to believe that ever any man did or could learn the somewhat awful truth that in a certain ruby-colored elixir there lurked a divine power to chase away the genius of ennui without subsequently abusing this power. To taste but once from the tree of knowledge is fatal to the subsequent power of abstinence. True it is, that generations have used laudanum as an anodyne, (for instance, hospital patients,) who have not afterwards courted its powers as a voluptuous stimulant; but that, be sure, has arisen from no abstinence in *them*. There are, in fact, two classes of temperaments as to this terrific drug—those which are and those which are not preformed to its power; those which genially expand to its temptations, and those which frostily exclude them. Not in the energies of the will, but in the qualities of the nervous organization, lies the dread arbitration of—Fall, or stand: doomed thou art to yield, or, strengthened constitutionally, to resist. Most of those who have but a low sense of the spells lying couchant in opium have practically none at all; for the initial fascination is for *them* effectually defeated by the sickness which Nature has

associated with the first stages of opium eating. But to that other class, whose nervous sensibilities vibrate to their profoundest depths under the first touch of the angelic poison, even as a lover's ear thrills on hearing unexpectedly the voice of her whom he loves, opium is the Amreeta cup of beatitude. You know the *Paradise Lost*? and you remember from the eleventh book, in its earlier part, that laudanum already existed in Eden — nay, that it was used medicinally by an archangel; for, after Michael had “purged with euphrasy and rue” the eyes of Adam, lest he should be unequal to the mere *sight* of the great visions about to unfold their draperies before him, next he fortifies his fleshly spirits against the *affliction* of these visions, of which visions the first was death. And how?

“He from the well of life three drops instilled.”

What was their operation?

“So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,  
*Eren to the inmost seat of mental sight,*  
 That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,  
 Sank down, and all his spirits became entranced.  
 But him the gentle angel by the hand  
 Soon raised ——”

The second of these lines it is which betrays the presence of laudanum. It is in the faculty of mental vision, it is in the increased power of dealing with the shadowy and the dark, that the characteristic virtue of opium lies. Now, in the original higher

sensibility is found some palliation for the *practice* of opium eating ; in the greater temptation is a greater excuse. And in this faculty of self-revelation is found some palliation for *reporting* the case to the world, which both Coleridge and his biographer have overlooked.

## THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH.

### SECTION THE FIRST.—THE GLORY OF MOTION.

SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M. P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter<sup>60</sup> of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or which is the same thing,<sup>61</sup> discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did not marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organized by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, 1st, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; 2dly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; 3dly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; 4thly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that, in the midst of vast distances<sup>62</sup>—of storms, of darkness, of danger—overruled all

obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *baton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organization. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannizes over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualized and glorified object to an impassioned heart; and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* manhood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation; not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called "short terms;" that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as the homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail, no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer's establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage — viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys revolved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon bye-laws enacted by posting-houses for their own benefit, and upon other bye-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own



haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804, or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II.), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsides. Even to have kicked an outsider, might have been held to attain the foot concerned in that operation; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsides (the trinity of Pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four? I myself witnessed such an attempt; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavored to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsides were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders, in the particular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang

out, 'This way, my good men,' and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point, as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table, or *dais*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law — that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.<sup>63</sup>

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters — were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being 'raff' (the name at that period for "snobs"<sup>64</sup>), we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. And the analogy of theatres was valid against us, where no man can complain of the annoyances incident to the pit or gallery, having his instant remedy in paying the higher price of the boxes. But the soundness of this analogy we disputed. In the case of the theatre, it cannot be pretended that the inferior situations have any separate

attractions, unless the pit may be supposed to have an advantage for the purposes of the critic or the dramatic reporter. But the critic or reporter is a rarity. For most people, the sole benefit is in the price. Now, on the contrary, the outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat — these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which pressed us; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III.; but the exact mode of using it was an immense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made

some imperfect explanations upon this point; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, "Where was the emperor to sit?" The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Pekin gloried in the spectacle; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, "Where am *I* to sit?" But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty, unanimously opened the door, and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself; but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. "I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window — "I say, how am I to catch hold of the reins?" — "Anyhow," was the imperial answer; "don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes — *anyhow*." Finally this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into

a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits ; he descended in great pomp from his throne, with the severest resolution never to remount it. A public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck ; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo — whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi.

A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution ; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*. In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The 'public,' a well-known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues — had at first loudly opposed this revolution ; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us ; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, &c., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it ? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, **ne**re again young Oxford had the advantage. But the

contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often sur-rebribed; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election; and a horse-keeper, hostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly, "Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy — if noters and protesters are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life — then note you what I vehemently protest — viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every county should be running after you with his *posse*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house

seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances — to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again! — there *are* none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland;<sup>65</sup> except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the 'coal-cellar.' And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the lawgiver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat<sup>66</sup> in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches; it was treason, it was *læsa majestas*, it was by tendency arson; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves. I remarked to the coachman, with a quotation from Virgil's 'Æneid' really too hackneyed —

‘ Jam proximus ardet

Ucalegon.’

But, recollecting that the Virgilian part of the coachman's education might have been neglected, I inter-



pretted so far as to say, that perhaps at that moment the flames were catching hold of our worthy brother and inside passenger, Ucalegon. The coachman made no answer, which is my own way when a stranger addresses me either in Syriac or in Coptic, but by his faint sceptical smile he seemed to insinuate that he knew better; for that Ucalegon, as it happened, was not in the way-bill, and therefore could not have been booked.

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government — a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined — gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, they do not hear us as yet; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings. Treason they feel to be their crime; each individual carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder; his blood is attainted through six generations; and nothing is wanting but the headsmen and his axe, the block and the saw-dust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What! shall it be within

benefit of clergy to delay the king's message on the high road? — to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *sys'ole* and *diastole*, of the national intercourse? — to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages? Or can it be fancied, amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions. We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station; and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, &c. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavored in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes<sup>67</sup> of Marengo), 'Ah! wherefore have we not time to weep over you?' which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had no

time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *à fortiori* I upheld its rights; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some 'Tallyho' or 'Highflyer,' all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and color in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate color was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleet-rag, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of

leaving us behind. 'Do you see *that*?' I said to the coachman. — 'I see,' was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, 'which they upon the adverse faction wanted.' Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No*; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that*; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. 'Race as, if you

ike,' I replied, 'though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; and for its own sake I am glad that the "Tallyho" was disappointed.' So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists—viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle's traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra, and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded that the hawk should be brought before him; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk's head; but then that, immediately after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. 'Now,' said I to the Welshman, 'to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the "Tallyho," in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls, and then led off to instant execution.' The Welshman doubted if **that** could be warranted by law. And when I hinted

at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedency of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the 'Tallyho' appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *vivimus*. Yes, '*magna vivimus*;' we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realize our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac



light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings — kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowl-



edged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath road, have become the glorified inmate of my dreams? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams; yes, though by links of natural association she brings along with her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart, than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

Miss Fanny of the Bath road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from the road; but came so continually to meet the mail, that I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath mail, and wore the royal livery,<sup>68</sup> happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful granddaughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fal-

within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighborhood once told me) counted in her train a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favor; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight — only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she *is* so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favor might easily with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail was changing horses — a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then* — viz., about Waterloo — it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpapas of earth, in a contest with the admirers of granddaughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not? Was he not active? Was he not blooming? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

‘ Say, all our praises why should lords —— ’  
 Stop, that’s not the line.

‘ Say, all our roses why should girls engross ? ’

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper even than his granddaughter’s — *his* being drawn from the ale cask, Fanny’s from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd *length* of his back; but in our grandpapa it arose rather from the absurd *breadth* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honorable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet!), whilst inspecting professionally the buckles, the straps, and the silvery turrets<sup>69</sup> of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny’s hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rearward of her favor, as No. 199 + 1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath

mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love ; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

Ah, reader ! when I look back upon those days, it seems to me that all things change — all things perish. ‘ Perish the roses and the palms of kings : ’ perish even the crowns and trophies of Waterloo : thunder and lightning are not the thunder and lightning which I remember. Roses are degenerating. The Fannies of our island — though this I say with reluctance — are not visibly improving ; and the Bath road is notoriously superannuated. Crocodiles, you will say, are stationary. Mr. Waterton tells me that the crocodile does *not* change ; that a cayman, in fact, or an alligator, is just as good for riding upon as he was in the time of the Pharaohs. *That* may be ; but the reason is, that the crocodile does not live fast — he is a slow coach. I believe it is generally understood among naturalists, that the crocodile is a blockhead. It is my own impression that the Pharaohs were also blockheads. Now, as the Pharaohs and the crocodile domineered over Egyptian society, this accounts for a singular mistake that prevailed through innumerable generations on the Nile. The crocodile made the ridiculous blunder of supposing man to be meant chiefly for his own eating. Man, taking a different view of the subject, naturally met that mistake by another : he viewed the crocodile as a thing sometimes to worship, but always to run away from. And this continued until Mr. Waterton<sup>70</sup> changed the relations between the animals.

The mode of escaping from the reptile he showed to be, not by running away, but by leaping on its back, booted and spurred. The two animals had misunderstood each other. The use of the crocodile has now been cleared up — viz., to be ridden; and the final cause of man is, that he may improve the health of the crocodile by riding him a fox-hunting before breakfast. And it is pretty certain that any crocodile, who has been regularly hunted through the season, and is master of the weight he carries, will take a six-barred gate now as well as ever he would have done in the infancy of the pyramids.

If, therefore, the crocodile does *not* change, all things else undeniably *do*: even the shadow of the pyramids grows less. And often the restoration in vision of Fanny and the Bath road, makes me too pathetically sensible of that truth. Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, up rises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June; or, if I think for an instant of the rose in June, up rises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June, then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus — roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile, in a royal livery of scarlet and gold, with sixteen capes; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath mail. [And suddenly we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial, sculptured with the hours, that mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host.] Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough forest, amongst the lovely households<sup>71</sup> of the

roe-deer; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the thickets are rich with roses; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary animals—griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes—till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demoniac natures, whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest, <sup>one</sup> fair female hand, with the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.

#### GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY.

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position—partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their

arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity<sup>72</sup> of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorized rumor steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight P. M., to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time,<sup>73</sup> and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity — but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses — were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination — wheels, axles, linchpins, poles, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned every horse had been



groomed, with as much rigor as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition! — horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially his Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years — Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen — expressing the grandeur

of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir! — what sea-like ferment! — what a thundering of wheels! — what a trampling of hoofs! — what a sounding of trumpets! — what farewell cheers — what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail — ‘Liverpool for ever!’ — with the name of the particular victory — ‘Badajoz for ever!’ or ‘Salamanca for ever!’ The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long and all the next day — perhaps for even a longer period — many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred<sup>74</sup> miles — northwards for six hundred; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and wending into the broad uncrowded avenues of the north-

ern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natura' pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every story of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows — young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols — and rolling volleys of sympathizing cheers ran along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness — real or assumed — thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies — one likely to be 'mamma,' and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenious girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage! — by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them — and by the heightened color on

their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, 'See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory.' In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers -- I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me -- raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them*? Oh, no; they will not say *that*. They cannot deny -- they do not deny -- that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for twelve hours to come, we on the outside have the honor to be their brothers. Those poor women, again, who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labor -- do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birthright to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

Every joy, however, even rapturous joy -- such is the sad law of earth -- may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also

the glasses are all down — here, also, is an elderly lady seated ; but the two daughters are missing ; for the single young person sitting by the lady's side, seems to be an attendant — so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning ; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up ; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once ; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a ' Courier ' evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as — GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything ; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to

nave suffered the heaviest afflictions by the battle blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the raves and its details, as gave to her the appearance which amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *fey*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels;<sup>75</sup> whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendors, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we staid for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera — imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle.

The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23d Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses — *over* a trench where they could, *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervor (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then he was calling to his presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23d Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralyzed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23d were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment — a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama — in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself — to-morrow, or the next day, will publish



the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gayly as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly — poured out their noble blood as cheerfully — as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23d Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict — a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London — so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy — that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

## THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH.

### SECTION THE SECOND. — THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH.

WHAT is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cæna*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death, in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, 'That which should be most sudden.' On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors: — 'From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH — *Good Lord, deliver us.*' Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is ranked among the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of

Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life — as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word ‘sudden.’ It seems a petition — indulged rather and conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of physical temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing specia-

emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one. Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance — feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanor to an expectation so awful. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word *sudden*. Very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but perhaps they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a *Βιαιατος* — death that is *Biaios*, or, in other words, death that is brought about, not by internal and spontaneous change, but by active force, having its origin from without. In this meaning the two authorities agree. Thus far they are in harmony. But the difference is, that the Roman by the word 'sudden' means *unlingering*; whereas the Christian Litany by 'sudden death' means a death *without warning*, consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who

kneels down to gather into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense; one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But in the sense of the Litany, the mutineer's death is far from sudden; his offence originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate — having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Here at once, in this sharp verbal distinction, we comprehend the faithful earnestness with which a holy Christian Church pleads on behalf of her poor departing children, that God would vouchsafe to them the last great privilege and distinction possible on a death-bed — viz., the opportunity of untroubled preparation for facing this mighty trial. Sudden death, as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable, proposes a question of choice which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament. Meantime, one aspect of sudden death there is, one modification, upon which no doubt can arise, that of all martyrdoms it is the most agitating — viz., where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurrying, flying, inappreciably minute chance of evading it. Sudden as the danger which it affronts, must be any effort by which such an evasion can be accomplished. Even *that*, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case — viz.,

where the appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience, on behalf of some other life besides your own, accidentally thrown upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial; though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another — a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death; this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure, or effeminate collapse of your energies, you will be self-denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort, would have rescued you, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature — reveals its

deep-seated falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient Earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: ‘Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works,’ again ‘gives signs of wo that all is lost;’ and again the counter sigh is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

. . . . .

The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow mail, in the second or third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not



have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices were so arranged, either through necessity or through defect of system, as to make it requisite for the main north-western mail (*i. e.*, the *down* mail), on reaching Manchester, to halt for a number of hours; how many, I do not remember; six or seven, I think; but the result was, that, in the ordinary course, the mail recommenced its journey northwards about midnight. Wearied with the long detention at a gloomy hotel, I walked out about eleven o'clock at night for the sake of fresh air; meaning to fall in with the mail and resume my seat at the post-office. The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way; and did not reach the post-office until it was considerably past midnight; but, to my great relief (as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning), I saw in the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was, but, by some rare accident, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and notifying to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has hoisted his pocket-handkerchief once and for ever upon that virgin soil; thence-

forward claiming the *jus domini* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in upper chambers of the atmosphere, or groping in subterraneous shafts, or squatting audaciously on the surface of the soil, will be treated as trespassers — kicked, that is to say, or decapitated, as circumstances may suggest, by their very faithful servant, the owner of the said pocket-handkerchief. In the present case, it is probable that my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person — for, in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality — but it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and thus the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal.

Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles — viz., from a point seventy miles beyond London. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* also there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my own attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of bulk, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

‘*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.*’

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items: — 1, a monster he was; 2, dreadful; 3, shapeless; 4, huge; 5, who had lost an eye. But why

should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the 'Arabian Nights,' and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man's punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat* — that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor's edge — leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrelates* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip-hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some *suit-at-law* now pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the pur

pose of connecting with his professional pursuits and instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me*? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was kept here waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for me? What are they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-by; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office: which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles per hour: and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The

first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent.<sup>76</sup> Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal: he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep — a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avail him nothing. 'Oh, Cyclops!' I exclaimed, 'thou art mortal. My friend, thou snorest.' Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity — which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon — betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster: in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested: or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses, under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, on that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly

accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming; since now, after several days resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing 'Love amongst the Roses' for perhaps thirty times, without invitation, and without applause, had in revenge moodily resigned himself to slumber — not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of his Majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1, a conflict with powerful established interests; 2, a large system of new arrangements; and 3, a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at present, twice in the year<sup>77</sup> so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its

despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

On this occasion, the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birth-day — a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born<sup>78</sup> thoughts. The county was my own native county — upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labor in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly



subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citidal of labor) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight, and the first timid tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still in the confidence of children that tread without fear every chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy

steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror — the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remark this ominous accident of our situation. We

were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road — viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre — would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*.<sup>79</sup> Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering.<sup>80</sup> All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah! what a sul-  
 len mystery of fear, what a sigh of wo, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard? A whisper it was — a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off — secretly announcing a ruin  
 \* that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done — who was it that could do it — to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and

lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it? See then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gayety in a gig? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us* — and, 'twas me! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self — rests the responsibility of warning. Yet how should this be accomplished? Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned, of the foreign mails' being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and the only verdict was yet in arrear.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir! what are you about? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady — though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you — is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a-half. Oh heavens! what is it that I shall do? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the ‘Iliad’ to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Pelens, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted — and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted — and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could be*

done : more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step ; the second was for the young man ; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side — or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection — he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it ; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less : and why not ? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world ? No ; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him ; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations — must, without time for a prayer — must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not : sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down : already its gloomy shadow darkened above him ; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah ! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a-day : ah ! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons



on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, 'One way lies hope; take the other, and mourn for ever!' How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation — is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *him!*

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved, except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late: fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments — *they* hurry! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave



young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses — *they* also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our overtowering shadow: *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage — was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed — that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, 'Father, which art in heaven, do thou finish above what I on earth have attempted.' Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of

hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced, as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage — partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it — as if it sympathized with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady —

But the lady — ! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air,

fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night — from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight — from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love — suddenly as from the woods and fields — suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation — suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crownéd phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

# THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH.

## SECTION THE THIRD. — DREAM-FUGUE.

FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING THEME OF SUDDEN DEATH

‘ Whence the sound  
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,  
Was heard, of harp and organ ; and who moved  
Their stops and chords, was seen ; his volant touch  
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,  
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.’

*Par. Lost, B xi.*

*Tumultuosissimamente.*

PASSION of sudden death ! that once in youth I read  
and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs !<sup>81</sup>  
— rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst  
tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting  
her sepulchral bonds — of woman’s Ionic form bend-  
ing from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with  
eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands — waiting,  
watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet’s call to  
rise from dust for ever ! Ah, vision too fearful of  
shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses !  
— vision that didst start back, that didst reel away,  
like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire  
racing on the wings of the wind ! Epilepsy so brief  
of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die ?  
Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that  
still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the  
gorgeous mosaics of dreams ? Fragment of music too

passionate, heard once, and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror?

## I.

Lo, it is summer — almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide, and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating — she upon a fiery pinnace, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnace moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers — young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards *us* amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnace nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter — all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnace, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow

the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnacle was dismantled, the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. 'But where,' and I turned to our crew — 'where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi! Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them*?' Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, 'Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us: in seventy seconds she also will founder.'

## II.

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. 'Are they mad?' some voice exclaimed from our deck. 'Do they woo their ruin?' But in a moment, she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her as she ran before

the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling — rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying — there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how.

## III.

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem



of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens: and, last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness — saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds — saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm — these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. 'Hush!' I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen — 'hush! — this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else' — and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head — 'or else, oh heavens! it is victory that is final, victory that swallows up all strife.'

## IV.

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a tri-

amphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre: we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Te Deums* reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and trappings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshy weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed? We waited for a secret word that should bear witness to the hope of nations, as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was — Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The dreadful word shone by its own light; before us it went; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral.

Headlong was our pace; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying,

‘Chant the deliverer’s praise in every tongue,’  
and receiving answers from afar,

‘Such as once in heaven and earth were sung.’

And of their chanting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

Thus, as we ran like torrents — thus, as we swept with bridal rapture over the Campo Santo<sup>82</sup> of the cathedral graves — suddenly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon — a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward

with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs — bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages — battles from yesterday — battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers — battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands — like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests — faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us — dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Créci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played — but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. ‘Oh, baby!’ I exclaimed, ‘shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee!’ In

horror I rose at the thought; but then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on a bas-relief — a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips — sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in *thy* ears, oh baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling of storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips, as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us — ‘Whither has the infant fled? — is the young child caught up to God?’ Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed *through* the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted *on* the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? There, suddenly, within

that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman's head, and then of a woman's figure. The child it was — grown up to woman's height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood — sinking, rising, raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense, that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for *her*; that prayed when *she* could *not*; that fought with Heaven by tears for *her* deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

## V.

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals — gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense — threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter! — with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing — didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo — farewell love, and farewell anguish — rang through the dreadful *sanctus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye — were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again o the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with

the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook; and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced — to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest — that, having hid his face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending — from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending — in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with his ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside his arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify his goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn — with the secret word riding before thee — with the armies of the grave behind thee: seen thee sinking, rising, raving, despairing; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms; through desert seas; through the darkness of quicksands; through dreams, and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams — only that at the last, with one sling of his victorious arm, he might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of his love!



## NOTES.

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[WHEN Mr. De Quincey undertook the revision of his writings, in 1853, *THE CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER* suffered the most violent change at his hands. The original work with all its splendor and abruptness had been before the world for more than thirty years, and had been the foundation of the author's fame. Written when his power was most intense, it was revised when the garrulousness of age made him linger over the recollections of that portion of his life, but the original work has passed so completely into literature that it is impossible for the revision to dislodge it and take its place. In issuing a new edition, therefore, of the writings of De Quincey, it has been thought best to leave "The Confessions" and the "Suspiria" intact, as originally published, and to arrange under the title, "Additions to the Confessions of an Opium Eater," those passages which were introduced in the revised edition, or added as notes. By this means, while the original work is retained in its integrity, the reader is put in possession of all that De Quincey subsequently wrote under the same title, and by means of the references given below is enabled to connect the several additions with their proper chronological place in the main narrative.

The article on "Coleridge and Opium Eating," is placed in this volume in order to bring together all that De Quincey has written on the subject of his own experience in this habit, although the main part of the paper is otherwise associated, and would properly fall into place in another volume. "The English Mail Coach," as he has himself explained, belongs properly with the "Suspiria." This explanation occurs in one of his prefaces, and is herewith subjoined.]

"THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH." — This little paper, according to my original intention, formed part of the "Suspiria de Profundis," from which, for a momentary purpose, I did not scruple to detach it, and to publish it apart, as sufficiently intelligible even when dislocated from its place in a larger whole. To my surprise, however, one or two critics, not carelessly in conversation, but deliberately in print

professed their inability to apprehend the meaning of the whole, or to follow the links of the connection between its several parts. I am myself as little able to understand where the difficulty lies, or to detect any lurking obscurity, as those critics found themselves to unravel my logic. Possibly I may not be an indifferent and neutral judge in such a case. I will therefore sketch a brief abstract of the little paper according to my own original design, and then leave the reader to judge how far this design is kept in sight through the actual execution.

Thirty-seven years ago, or rather more, accident made me, in the dead of night, and of a night memorably solemn, the solitary witness to an appalling scene, which threatened instant death, in a shape the most terrific, to two young people, whom I had no means of assisting, except in so far as I was able to give them a most hurried warning of their danger; but even *that* not until they stood within the very shadow of the catastrophe, being divided from the most frightful of deaths by scarcely more, if more at all, than seventy seconds.

Such was the scene, such in its outline, from which the whole of this paper radiates as a natural expansion. The scene is circumstantially narrated in Section the Second, entitled, "The Vision of Sudden Death."

But a movement of horror and of spontaneous recoil from this dreadful scene naturally carried the whole of that scene, raised and idealized into my dreams, and very soon into a rolling succession of dreams. The actual scene, as looked down upon from the box of the mail, was transformed into a dream, as tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue. This troubled dream is circumstantially reported in Section the Third, entitled, "Dream-Fugue upon the Theme of Sudden Death." What I had beheld from my seat upon the mail, — the scenical strife of action and passion, of anguish and fear, as I had there witnessed them moving in ghostly silence; this duel between life and death narrowing itself to a point of such exquisite evanescence as the collision neared, — all these elements of the scene blended, under the law of association, with the previous and permanent features of distinction investing the mail itself, which features at that time lay — 1st, in velocity unprecedented; 2dly, in the power and beauty of the horses; 3dly, in the official connection with the government of a great nation; and, 4thly, in the function, almost a consecrated function, of publishing and diffusing through the land the great political events and especially the great battles during a conflict of unparalleled grandeur. These honorary distinctions are all described circumstan-

lially in the FIRST or introductory section ("The Glory of Motion"). The three first were distinctions maintained at all times; but the fourth and grandest belonged exclusively to the war with Napoleon; and this it was which most naturally introduced Waterloo into the dream. Waterloo, I understood, was the particular feature of the "Dream-Fugue" which my censors were least able to account for. Yet surely Waterloo, which, in common with every other great battle, it had been our special privilege to publish over all the land, most naturally entered the Dream under the license of our privilege. If not — if there be anything amiss — let the Dream be responsible. The Dream is a law to itself; and as well quarrel with a rainbow for showing, or for *not* showing, a secondary arch. So far as I know, every element in the shifting movements of the Dream derived itself either primarily from the incidents of the actual scene, or from secondary features associated with the mail. For example, the cathedral aisle derived itself from the mimic combination of features which grouped themselves together at the point of approaching collision, namely, an arrow-like section of the road, six hundred yards long, under the solemn lights described, with lofty trees meeting overhead in arches. The guard's horn, again — a humble instrument in itself — was yet glorified as the organ of publication for so many great national events. And the incident of the Dying Trumpeter, who rises from a marble bas-relief, and carries a marble trumpet to his marble lips for the purpose of warning the female infant, was doubtless secretly suggested by my own imperfect effort to seize the guard's horn, and to blow a warning blast. But the Dream knows best; and the Dream, I say again, is the responsible party.

## NOTE 1. Page xi.

[In reprinting the address "From the Author to the Reader," in the revised edition of "The Confessions of an Opium Eater," De Quincey heads it "Original Preface in the Year 1821." The attentive reader will discover, however, that the author has not contented himself with reprinting the preface, as the caption would intimate, as a historical matter, but has altered this "original preface" in verbal particulars, and, amongst other slight changes, has filled in the blanks so that one reads "the eloquent and benevolent William Wilberforce; the late Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Isaac Milner; the first Lord Erskine; Mr. ———, the philosopher, a late under-secretary of state (viz., Mr. Addington, brother to the first Lord Sidmouth, who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium, in the very same words as the Dean of Carlisle, viz. : 'that he felt as though rats were

gnawing at the coats of his stomach'); Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and many others hardly less celebrated."]

NOTE 2. Page xi.

"*The late Dean of ———*:" — Isaac Milner. He was *nominally* known to the public as Dean of Carlisle, being colloquially always called *Dean* Milner; but virtually he was best known in his own circle as the head of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he usually resided. In common with his brother, Joseph of Hull, he was substantially a Wesleyan Methodist; and in that character, as regarded principles and the general direction of his sympathies, he pursued his deceased brother's History of the Christian Church down to the era of Luther. In these days, he would perhaps not be styled a Methodist, but simply a Low-Churchman. By whatever title described, it is meantime remarkable that a man confessedly so conscientious as Dean Milner could have reconciled to his moral views the holding of church preferment so important as this deanery in combination with the headship of an important college. One or other must have been consciously neglected. Such a record, meantime, powerfully illustrates the advances made by the Church during the last generation in practical homage to self-denying religious scruples. A very lax man would not in these days allow himself to do that which thirty years ago a severe Church-Methodist (regarded by many even as a fanatic) persisted in doing, without feeling himself called on for apology. If I have not misapprehended its tenor, this case serves most vividly to illustrate the higher standard of moral responsibility which prevails in this current generation. We do injustice daily to our own age; which, by many a sign, palpable and secret, I feel to be more emphatically, than any since the period of Queen Elizabeth and Charles I., an intellectual, a moving, and a self-conflicting age: and inevitably, where the intellect has been preternaturally awakened, the moral sensibility must soon be commensurately stirred. The very distinctions, psychologic or metaphysical, by which, as its hinges and articulations, our modern thinking moves, proclaim the subtler character of the questions which now occupy our thoughts. Not as pedantic only, but as suspiciously unintelligible, such distinctions would, one hundred and thirty years ago, have been viewed as indictable; and perhaps (in company with Mandeville's "Political Economy") would have been seriously prosecuted as a nuisance to the Middlesex Quarter-Sessions. Recurring, however, to Dean Milner, and the reconections of his distinguished talents amongst the contemporary circles of the first generation in this nineteenth century, I wish to mention that these talents are most

feebly measured by any of his occasional writings, all drawn from him apparently by mere pressure of casual convenience. In conversation it was that he asserted *adequately* his preëminent place. Wordsworth, who met him often at the late Lord Lonsdale's table, spoke of him uniformly as the chief potentate colloquially of his own generation, and as the man beyond all others (Burke being departed) who did not live upon his recollections, but met the demands of every question that engaged his sympathy by spontaneous and elastic movements of novel and original thought. As an opium-eater, Dean Milner was understood to be a strenuous wrestler with the physical necessity that coerced him into this habit. From several quarters I have heard that his daily *ration* was 34 grains (or about 850 drops of laudanum), divided into four portions, and administered to him at regular intervals of six hours by a confidential valet.

## NOTE 3. Page xi.

"*Mr. —, the philosopher:*" — Who is Mr. Dash, the philosopher? Really I have forgot. Not through any fault of my own, but on the motion of some absurd coward having a voice potential at the press, all the names were struck out behind my back in the first edition of the book, thirty-five years ago. I was not consulted; and did not discover the absurd blanks until months afterwards, when I was taunted with them very reasonably by a caustic reviewer. Nothing could have a more ludicrous effect than this appeal to shadows — to my Lord Dash, to Dean Dash, and to Mr. Secretary Dash. Very naturally it thus happened to Mr. Philosopher Dash that his burning light, alas! was extinguished irrecoverably in the general *mêlée*. Meantime, there was no excuse whatever for this absurd interference such as might have been alleged in any personality capable of causing pain to any one person concerned. All the cases, except, perhaps, that of Wilberforce (about which I have at this moment some slight lingering doubts), were matters of notoriety to large circles of friends. It is due to Mr. John Taylor, the accomplished publisher of the work, that I should acquit *him* of any share in this absurdity.

## NOTE 4. Page xiii.

[The original preface stopped at this point, but the "Original Preface in the Year 1821," as reprinted by Mr. De Quincey, continues, by the momentum it had acquired, for two or three pages more, which are here given. The author, in the last paragraph, it will be seen, addresses the reader that he must take the words "original preface" with some modification.]

And at this point I shall say no more than that opium, as the *one* sole *catholic* anodyne which hitherto has been revealed to man, secondly, as the one sole anodyne which in a vast majority of cases is *irresistible*; thirdly, as by many degrees the most potent of all known counter-agents to nervous irritation, and to the formidable curse of *tædium vite*; fourthly, as by possibility, under an argument undeniably plausible, alleged by myself, the sole known agent — not for curing *when* formed, but for intercepting whilst likely to be formed — the great English scourge of pulmonary consumption; — I say that opium, as wearing these, or *any* of these, four beneficent characteristics — I say that any agent whatever making good such pretensions, no matter what its name, is entitled haughtily to refuse the ordinary classification and treatment which opium receives in books. I say that opium, or any agent of equal power, is entitled to assume that it was revealed to man for some higher object than that it should furnish a target for moral denunciations, ignorant where they are not hypocritical, childish where not dishonest; that it should be set up as a theatrical scarecrow for superstitious terrors, of which the *result* is oftentimes to defraud human suffering of its readiest alleviation, and of which the *purpose* is, “*Ut pueris placeant et declamatio fiant.*” \*

In one sense, and remotely, all medicines and modes of medical treatment offer themselves as anodynes — that is, so far as they promise ultimately to relieve the suffering connected with physical maladies or infirmities. But we do not, in the special and ordinary sense, designate as “anodynes” those remedies which obtain the relief from pain only as a secondary and distant effect following out from the *cure* of the ailment; but those only we call anodynes which obtain this relief, and pursue it as the *primary* and *immediate* object. If, by giving tonics to a child suffering periodic pains in the stomach, we were ultimately to banish those pains, this would not warrant us in calling such tonics by the name of anodynes; for the neutralization of the pains would be a circuitous process of nature, and might probably require weeks for its evolution. But a true anodyne (as, for instance, half-a-dozen drops of laudanum or a dessert-spoonful of some warm carminative mixed with brandy) will often banish the misery suffered by a child in five or six minutes. Amongst the most potent of anodynes, we may rank hemlock, henbane, chloroform, and opium. But unquestionably the three first have a most narrow field of action, by comparison with opium. This, beyond all other agents made known

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\* That they may win the applause of schoolboys, and furnish matter for a prize essay.

to man, is the mightiest for its command, and for the extent of its command, over pain; and so much mightier than any other, that I should think, in a Pagan land, supposing it to have been adequately made known \* through experimental acquaintance with its revolutionary magic, opium would have had altars and priests consecrated to its benign and tutelary powers. But this is not my own object in the present little work. Very many people have thoroughly misconstrued this object; and therefore I beg to say here, in closing my Original Preface, a little remodelled, that what I contemplated in these Confessions was to emblazon the power of opium — not over bodily disease and pain, but over the grander and more shadowy world of dreams.

## NOTE 5. Page 18.

[At the mention of this circumstance in the revised edition of the Confessions, De Quincey enters into a fuller account of these guardians, and episodically of the relation of guardianship. These pages are given in the Additions, p. 295 of this volume.]

## NOTE 6. Page 20.

[The experience summed up in the two pages ending at this point was afterward expanded into the chapters in the Additions, headed "A Manchester Home," p. 308, and "At the Manchester Grammar School," p. 313.]

## NOTE 7. Page 20.

[LADY CARBERY. See also for an amplification of this part of his experience the chapter in the Additions, headed "Elopement from Manchester," p. 354.]

## NOTE 8. Page 25.

[The summary of this brief paragraph is fully extended in the chapter, "Wanderings in North Wales," in the Additions, p. 374.]

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\* "*Adequately made known*:" — Precisely this, however, was impossible. No feature of ancient Pagan life has more entirely escaped notice than the extreme rarity, costliness, and circuitous accessibility of the more powerful drugs, especially of mineral drugs; and of drugs requiring elaborate preparation, or requiring much manufacturing skill. When the process of obtaining any manufactured drug was slow and intricate, it could most rarely be called for. And rarely called for, why should it be produced? By looking into the history and times of Herod the Great, as reported by Josephus, the reader will gain some notion of the mystery and the suspicion surrounding all attempts at importing such drugs as could be applied to murderous purposes, consequently of the delay, the difficulty, and the peril in forming an familiar acquaintance with opium.



## NOTE 9. Page 25.

[“*B—* :” — Bangor. The Bishop of B—, is the Bishop of Bangor, then Dr. Cleaver.]

## NOTE 10. Page 29.

[De Quincey’s wanderings from this time until he reached London are given in detail in the chapter in Additions, entitled, “From Wales to London,” p. 404.]

## NOTE 11. Page 32.

[The means on which De Quincey relied for sustaining himself in London are given in Additions, in the chapter, “The Plans laid for London Life,” p. 427.]

## NOTE 12. Page 35.

[“*Mr. —* :” — This person, under the name of Brown-Brunell or Brunell-Brown is described at greater length in the chapter of the Additions last cited.]

## NOTE 13. Page 37.

[“*In a well known part of London* :” — De Quincey felt himself at liberty, when revising the Confessions, to point out the exact location, “at the northwest corner of Greek Street, being the house on that side the street nearest to Soho Square.”]

## NOTE 14. Page 37.

[“*My birthday* :” — De Quincey was born August 15, 1785.]

## NOTE 15. Page 45.

“*I applied to a Jew named D—* :” — At this period (autumn of 1856), when thirty-five years have elapsed since the first publication of these memoirs, reasons of delicacy can no longer claim respect for concealing the Jew’s name, or at least the name which he adopted in his dealings with the Gentiles. I say, therefore, without scruple, that the name was Dell : and some years later it was one of the names that came before the House of Commons in connection with something or other (I have long since forgotten *what*) growing out of the parliamentary movement against the Duke of York, in reference to Mrs. Clark, &c. Like all the other Jews with whom I have had negotiations, he was frank and honorable in his mode of conducting business. What he promised, he performed; and if his terms were high, as naturally they could not *but* be, to cover his risks, he avowed them from the first.

NOTE 16. Page 46.

[“*Earl of — — :*” — Earl of Altamont.]

NOTE 17. Page 46.

[“*Marquis of — — :*” — Marquis of Sligo.]

NOTE 18. Page 47.

[“*M— and Sl. :*” — Mayo and Sligo.]

NOTE 19. Page 52.

“*A murder committed on or near Hounslow Heath :*” — Two men, Holloway and Haggerty, were long afterwards convicted, upon very questionable evidence, as the perpetrators of this murder. The main testimony against them was that of a Newgate turnkey, who had imperfectly overheard a conversation between the two men. The current impression was that of great dissatisfaction with the evidence; and this impression was strengthened by the pamphlet of an acute lawyer, exposing the unsoundness and incoherency of the statements relied upon by the court. They were executed, however, in the teeth of all opposition. And as it happened that an enormous wreck of life occurred at the execution (not fewer, I believe, than sixty persons having been trampled under foot by the unusual pressure of some brewers’ draymen forcing their way with linked arms to the space below the drop), this tragedy was regarded for many years by a section of the London mob as a providential judgment upon the passive metropolis.

NOTE 20. Page 52.

[“*My friend, Lord — — :*” — Lord Altamont.]

NOTE 21. Page 54.

[“*University of — — :*” — Lord Altamont was gone to Jesus College, Cambridge.]

NOTE 22. Page 54.

[“*Earl of D— — :*” — Lord Desert. “I had known Lord Desert,” says De Quincey elsewhere, “the eldest son of a very large family, some years earlier, when bearing the title of Lord Castlecuffe. Cuffe was the family name; and I believe that they traced their descent from a person of some historic interest — viz., that Cuffe who was secretary to the unhappy Earl of Essex during his treasonable *émeute* against the government of Queen Elizabeth.”]

## NOTE 23. Page 57.

[“*Reconciliation with my friends:*” — These friends were his guardian, and the remote part of England to which he went was the Priory, near Chester, mentioned on p. 389.]

## NOTE 24. Page 72.

“*For he was a surgeon and had himself taken opium largely:*” — This surgeon it was who first made me aware of the dangerous variability in opium as to strength under the shifting proportions of its combination with alien impurities. Naturally, as a man professionally alive to the danger of creating any artificial need of opium beyond what the anguish of his malady at any rate demanded, trembling every hour on behalf of his poor children, lest, by any indiscretion of his own, he should precipitate the crisis of his disorder, he saw the necessity of reducing the daily dose to a *minimum*. But to do this he must first obtain the means of measuring the quantities of opium; not the apparent quantities as determined by weighing, but the *virtual* quantities after allowing for the alloy or varying amounts of impurity. This, however, was a visionary problem. To allow for it was simply impossible. The problem, therefore, changed its character. Not to measure the impurities was the object; for, whilst entangled with the operative and efficient parts of the opium, they could not be measured. To separate and eliminate the impure (or inert) parts, this was now the object. And this was effected finally by a particular mode of boiling the opium. That done, the residuum became equable in strength; and the daily doses could be nicely adjusted. About 18 grains formed his daily ration for many years. This, upon the common hospital equation, expresses 18 times 25 drops of laudanum. But since 25 is  $\frac{100}{4}$ , therefore 18 times one quarter of a hundred is  $\frac{1}{4}$  one quarter of 1800, and that, I suppose, is 450. So much this surgeon averaged upon each day for about twenty years. Then suddenly began a fiercer stage of anguish from his disease. But then, also, the fight was finished, and the victory was won. All duties were fulfilled; his children prosperously launched in life; and death, which to himself was becoming daily more necessary as a relief from torment, now fell injuriously upon nobody.

## NOTE 25. Page 75.

“*The late Duke of —:*” — The late Duke of Norfolk. My authority was the late Sir George Beaumont, an old familiar acquaintance of the Duke's. But such expressions are always liable to grievous mis-

application. By "the late" duke, Sir George meant that duke once so well known to the nation as the partisan friend of Fox, Burke, Sheridan, etc., at the era of the great French Revolution, in 1789-1793. Since *his* time, I believe there have been three generations of ducal Howards — who are always interesting to the English nation, first, from the bloody historic traditions surrounding their great house; secondly, from the fact of their being at the head of the British Peerage.

## NOTE 26. Page 75.

"*Grassini*:" — Thrilling was the pleasure with which almost always I heard this angelic Grassini. Shivering with expectation I sat, when the time drew near for her golden epiphany; shivering I rose from my seat, incapable of rest, when that heavenly and harp-like voice sang its own victorious welcome in its prelusive *threttánelo* — *threttánelo*. This is the beautiful representative echo by which Aristophanes expresses the sound of the Grecian *phorminx*, or of some other instrument, which conjecturally has been shown most to resemble our modern European harp. In the case of ancient Hebrew instruments used in the temple service, random and idle must be all the guesses through the Greek Septuagint or the Latin Vulgate to identify any one of them. But as to Grecian instruments the case is different; always there is a remote chance of digging up some marble sculpture of orchestral appurtenances and properties. Yet all things change; this same Grassini, whom once I adored, afterwards, when gorged with English gold, went off to Paris; and when I heard on what terms she lived with a man so unmagnumanimous as Napoleon, I came to hate her. Did I complain of any man's hating England, or teaching a woman to hate her benefactress? Not at all; but simply of his adopting at second hand the malice of a jealous nation, with which originally he could have had no sincere sympathy. Hate us, if you please; but not sycophantishly, by way of paying court to others.

## NOTE 27. Page 79.

"*Soot*." In the large capacious chimneys of the rustic cottages throughout the Lake district, you can see up the entire cavity from the seat which you occupy, as an honored visitor, in the chimney corner. There I used often to hear (though not to see) bees. Their murmuring was audible, though their bodily forms were too small to be visible at that altitude. On inquiry, I found that soot (chiefly from wood and peats) was useful in some stage of their wax or honey manufacture.

## NOTE 28. Page 81.

[“*Great town of L—* : ” — Liverpool.]

## NOTE 29. Page 86.

“*Anastasius* : ” — The reader of this generation will marvel at these repeated references to “*Anastasius* ; ” it is now an almost forgotten book, so vast has been the deluge of novel-writing talent, really original and powerful, which has overflowed our literature during the lapse of thirty-five years from the publication of these Confessions. “*Anastasius* ” was written by the famous and opulent Mr. Hope ; and was in 1821 a book both of high reputation and of great influence amongst the leading circles of society.

## NOTE 30. Page 92.

“*A seaport about forty miles distant* : ” — Between the seafaring populations on the coast of Lancashire, and the corresponding populations on the coast of Cumberland (such as Ravenglass, Whitehaven, Workington, Maryport, etc.), there was a slender current of interchange constantly going on, and especially in the days of pressgangs — in part by sea, but in part also by land. By the way, I may mention, as an interesting fact which I discovered from an almanac and itinerary, dated about the middle of Queen Elizabeth’s reign (say, 1579), that the official route in *her* days for queen’s messengers to the north of Ireland, and of course for travellers generally, was not (as now) through Grasmere, and thence by St. John’s Vale, Threlkeld (for the short cut by Shoulthwaite Moss was then unknown), Keswick, Cockermouth, and Whitehaven. Up to St. Oswald’s Church, Gresmere (so it was then spelled, in deference to its Danish original), the route lay as at present. Thence it turned round the lake to the left, crossed Hammerscar, up *Little* Langdale, across Wrynose to Egremont, and from Egremont to Whitehaven.

## NOTE 31. Page 93.

[“*Beautiful English face of the girl* : ” — For a further reference to this girl, who was Barbara Lewthwaite, made famous by Wordsworth, see the chapter in the Additions, headed “*Barbara Lewthwaite*,” page 437.]

## NOTE 32. Page 96.

“*Let there be a cottage standing in a valley* : ” — The cottage and the valley concerned in this description were not imaginary ; the valley was the lovely one, *in those days*, of Grasmere ; and the cottage was

occupied for more than twenty years by myself, as immediate successor, in the year 1809, to Wordsworth. Looking to the limitation here laid down — viz., *in those days* — the reader will inquire, in what way *Time* can have affected the beauty of Grasmere. Do the Westmoreland valleys turn gray-headed? Oh, reader! this is a painful memento for some of us! Thirty years ago, a gang of Vandals (nameless, I thank Heaven, to me), for the sake of building a mail-coach road that never would be wanted, carried, at a cost of £3,000 to the defrauded parish, a horrid causeway of sheer granite masonry, for three quarters of a mile, right through the loveliest succession of secret forest dells and shy recesses of the lake, margined by unrivalled ferns, amongst which was the *Osmunda regalis*. This sequestered angle of Grasmere is described by Wordsworth, as it unveiled itself on a September morning, in the exquisite poems on the “Naming of Places.” From this also — viz., this spot of ground, and this magnificent crest (the *Osmunda*) — was suggested that unique line — the finest independent line through all the records of verse

“Or lady of the lake,  
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.”

Rightly, therefore, did I introduce this limitation. The Grasmere before and after this outrage were two different vales.

NOTE 33. Page 97.

[“*As Mr.* — *says:*”] — Mr. Anti-Slavery Clarkson.

NOTE 34. Page 102.

[The section numbered 2, has been very much amplified in the revision and is now given at page 455, under the title “Notes on the Use of Opium.”]

NOTE 35. Page 104.

[“— *reads vilely:*” — John Kemble is referred to, and afterward Mrs. Siddons.]

NOTE 36. Page 104.

[“*W.*” — Wordsworth.]

NOTE 37. Page 112.

“*The whole and every part:*” — The heroine of this remarkable case was a girl about nine years old: and there can be little doubt that she looked down as far within the *crater* of death — that awful volcano — as any human being ever *can* have done that has lived to draw back and to report her experience. Not less than ninety years did

she survive this memorable escape; and I may describe her as in all respects a woman of remarkable and interesting qualities. She enjoyed, throughout her long life, as the reader will readily infer, serene and cloudless health; had a masculine understanding; revered truth not less than did the Evangelists; and led a life of saintly devotion, such as might have glorified "*Hilarion or Paul.*" [The words in italic are Ariosto's.] I mention these traits as characterizing her in a memorable extent, that the reader may not suppose himself relying upon a dealer in exaggerations, upon a credulous enthusiast, or upon a careless wielder of language. Forty-five years had intervened between the first time and the last time of her telling me this anecdote, and not one iota had shifted its ground amongst the incidents, nor had any the most trivial of the circumstantiations suffered change. The scene of the accident was the least of valleys, what the Greeks of old would have called an *αγκος*, and we English should properly call a dell. Human tenant it had none: even at noonday it was a solitude; and would oftentimes have been a silent solitude but for the brawling of a brook — not broad, but occasionally deep — which ran along the base of the little hills. Into this brook, probably into one of its dangerous pools, the child fell: and, according to the ordinary chances, she could have had but a slender prospect indeed of any deliverance, for, although a dwelling-house was close by, it was shut out from view by the undulations of the ground. How long the child lay in the water, was probably never inquired earnestly until the answer had become irrecoverable: for a servant, to whose care the child was then confided, had a natural interest in suppressing the whole case. From the child's own account, it should seem that *asphyxia* must have announced its commencement. A process of struggle and deadly suffocation was passed through half consciously. This process terminated by a sudden blow apparently *on* or *in* the brain, after which there was no pain or conflict; but in an instant succeeded a dazzling rush of light; immediately after which came the solemn apocalypse of the entire past life. Meantime, the child's disappearance in the water had happily been witnessed by a farmer who rented some fields in this little solitude, and by a rare accident was riding through them at the moment. Not being very well mounted, he was retarded by the hedges and other fences in making his way down to the water; some time was thus lost; but once at the spot, he leaped in, booted and spurred, and succeeded in delivering one that must have been as nearly counted amongst the populations of the grave as perhaps the laws of the shadowy world can suffer to return



## NOTE 38. Page 113.

"August, 1642:" — I think (but at the moment have no means of verifying my conjecture) that this day was the 24th of August. On or about that day Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham; which, ominously enough (considering the strength of such superstitions in the seventeenth century, and, amongst the generations of that century, more especially in this particular generation of the Parliamentary War), was blown down during the succeeding night. Let me remark, in passing, that no falsehood can virtually be greater or more malicious, than that which imputes to Archbishop Laud a special or exceptional faith in such mute warnings.

## NOTE 39. Page 115.

"From a great modern poet:" — What poet? It was Wordsworth; and why did I not formally name him? This throws a light backwards upon the strange history of Wordsworth's reputation. The year in which I wrote and published these Confessions was 1821; and at that time the name of Wordsworth, though beginning to emerge from the dark cloud of scorn and contumely which had hitherto overshadowed it, was yet most imperfectly established. Not until ten years later was his greatness cheerfully and generally acknowledged. I, therefore, as the very earliest (without one exception) of all who came forward, in the beginning of his career, to honor and welcome him, shrank with disgust from making any sentence of mine the occasion for an explosion of vulgar malice against him. But the grandeur of the passage here cited inevitably spoke for itself; and he that would have been most scornful on hearing the name of the poet coupled with this epithet of "great," could not but find his malice intercepted, and himself cheated into cordial admiration, by the splendor of the verses.

## NOTE 40. Page 127.

"Jeremy Taylor:" — In all former editions, I had ascribed this sentiment to Jeremy Taylor. On a close search, however, wishing to verify the quotation, it appeared that I had been mistaken. Something very like it occurs more than once in the bishop's voluminous writings; but the exact passage moving in my mind had evidently been this which follows, from Lord Bacon's "Essay on Death:" "It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other."

NOTE 41. Page 273.

["*A—t:*" — Altamont.]

NOTE 42. Page 295.

["*My Guardians:*" — See page 18, and Note 5.]

NOTE 43. Page 308.

["*A Manchester Home:*" — See page 20, and Note 6.]

NOTE 44. Page 354.

["*Elopement from Manchester:*" — See page 20, and Note 7.]

NOTE 45. Page 374.

["*Wanderings in North Wales:*" — See page 25, and Note 8.]

NOTE 46. Page 404.

["*From Wales to London:*" — See page 29, and Note 10.]

NOTE 47. Page 427.

["*The Plans laid for London Life:*" — See page 32, and Note 11.]

NOTE 48. Page 437.

["*Barbara Lewthwaite:*" — See page 93, and Note 31.]

NOTE 49. Page 455.

["*Notes on the use of Opium:*" — See page 102, and Note 34.]

NOTE 50. Page 480.

"*Jacob Boehmen:*" — We ourselves had the honor of presenting to Mr. Coleridge Law's English version of Jacob — a set of huge quartos. Some months afterwards we saw this work lying open, and one volume at least overflowing, in parts, with the commentaries and the *corollaries* of Coleridge. Whither has this work, and so many others swathed about with Coleridge's manuscript notes, vanished from the world?

NOTE 51. Page 482.

"*Qualities of his horse:*" — One fact, tolerably notorious, should have whispered to Mr. Gillman that all anecdotes which presuppose for their basis any equestrian skill or habits in Coleridge rest upon moonshine. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's first attempts at horsemanship were pretty nearly his last. What motive swayed the judgment, or what stormy impulse drove the passionate despair of Samuel Taylor Coleridge into quitting Jesus College, Cambridge, was never clearly o

certainly made known to the very nearest of his friends; which lends further probability to a rumor, already in itself probable enough, that this motive which led, or this impulse which drove, the unhappy man into headlong acts of desperation, was — the reader will guess for himself, though ten miles distant — a woman. In fact, most of us play the fool at least once in our life-career; and the criminal cause of our doing so is pretty well ascertained by this time in all cases to be a woman. Coleridge was hopelessly dismissed by his proud, disdainful goddess, although really she might have gone farther and faced worse. I am able, by female aid, to communicate a pretty close description of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as he was in the year 1796. In stature, according to the severe measurement taken down in the *studio* of a very distinguished artist, he was exactly 5 feet 10 inches in height; with a blooming and healthy complexion; beautiful and luxuriant hair, falling in natural curls over his shoulders; and, as a lady (the successor of Hannah More in her most lucrative boarding-school) said to me about the year of Waterloo, “simply the most perfect realization of a pastoral Strephon that in all her life she had looked upon.” *Strephon* was the romantic name that survived from her rosy days of sweet seventeen; at present, *Strephon*, as well as *Chloe*, are at a discount; but what she meant was an *Adonis*. By reason of reading too much Kant and Schelling, he grew fat and corpulent towards Waterloo; but he was then slender and agile as an antelope.

## NOTE 52. Page 485.

“*Arbitrary limitation:*” — Malthus would have rejoined by saying that the flower-pot limitation was the actual limitation of Nature in our present circumstances. In America it is otherwise, he would say; but England is the very flower pot you suppose; she is a flower pot which cannot be multiplied, and cannot even be enlarged. Very well; so be it; (which we say in order to waive irrelevant disputes;) but then the true inference will be, not that vegetable increase proceeds under a different law from that which governs animal increase, but that, through an accident of position, the experiment cannot be tried in England. Surely the levers of Archimedes, with submission to Sir Edward B. Lytton, were not the less levers because he wanted the *locum standi*. It is proper, by the way, that we should inform the reader of this generation where to look for Coleridge’s skirmishings with Malthus. They are to be found chiefly in the late Mr. William Hazlitt’s work on that subject — a work which Coleridge so far claimed as to assert that it had been substantially made up from his own conversation.

## NOTE 53. Page 495.

*Vide*, in particular, for the most exquisite exhibition of pigheadedness that the world can furnish, his perverse evidence on the once famous case at the Warwick assizes, of Captain Donelan for poisoning his brother-in-law, Sir Theodosius Boughton.

## NOTE 54. Page 499.

“*Mrs. Brownrigg* :” — Draco and the Bishop belong to history, — the first as bloody lawgiver in the days of the elder Athens, the Bishop as fiery disciplinarian to weak, relapsing *perverts* [such is the modern slang]: sneaking perverts like myself and my ever-honored reader, who would be very willing to give the Bishop a kick in the dark, but would find ourselves too much of cowards to stand to it when the candles were brought. These men are well known; but who is Mrs. Brownrigg? The reader would not have asked had he lived in the days of the Anti-Jacobin, who describes Mrs. Brownrigg as the woman

“ who whipp'd two female 'prentices to death,  
And hid them in the coal-hole.”

## NOTE 55. Page 502.

“*Hopped de twig* :” — *Ist eben jetzt gestorben* was his German idea, which he thus rendered in classical English.

## NOTE 56. Page 504.

It was printed at the end of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which Dr. Cook edited.

## NOTE 57. Page 504.

Χρυσεις. It is remarkable that this epithet has been everywhere assigned to τυχης. Δωρα τυχης, the gifts of Fortune, which in this place is meant to indicate *riches*, corresponding to Gray's “All that Wealth e'er gave,” might seem at first sight to justify this allocation of the epithet golden. But on this way of understanding the appropriation, we are met by a prosaic and purely mechanic fact — the gifts of golden Fortune, as the giver of golden coins — Persian darics or English guineas. Meantime this epithet has an old traditional consecration to Venus, and in such an application springs upward like a pyramid of fire into a far more illimitable and imaginative value. A truth which Shakespeare caught at once by a subtle divination of his own unfathomable sensibility. Accordingly, without needing any Grecian guidance or model, how profound is the effect of that line: —

What is't that takes from thee thy golden sleep?

## NOTE 58. Page 507.

[“*A letter of Coleridge’s* :” — The passage referred to is as follows : “ You will never *hear* anything but truth from me ; prior habits render it out of my power to tell an untruth, but unless carefully observed, I dare not promise that I should not, with regard to this detested poison, be capable of acting one. No sixty hours have yet passed without my having taken laudanum, though for the last week comparatively trifling doses. I have full belief that your anxiety need not be extended beyond the first week, and for the first week, I shall not, I must not be permitted to leave your house, unless with you.” Gillman’s “*Life of Coleridge*,” vol. i., page 275. I think that De Quincey hardly treats this passage fairly when he assumes that Coleridge regards a week as sufficient for weaning one’s self from opium.]

## NOTE 59. Page 513.

[“*Some intemperate passages* :” — The following are the passages referred to : “ God knows that from that moment I was the victim of pain and terror, nor had I at any time taken the flattering poison as a stimulus, or for any craving after pleasurable sensations. I needed none; and oh! with what unutterable sorrow did I read the ‘*Confessions of an Opium Eater*,’ in which the writer with morbid vanity, makes a boast of what was my misfortune, for he had been faithfully and with an agony of zeal warned of the gulf, and yet willingly struck into the current . . . Oh, may the God to whom I look for mercy through Christ, show mercy on the author of the ‘*Confessions of an Opium Eater*,’ if as I have too strong reason to believe, his book has been the occasion of seducing others into this withering vice through wantonness. From this aggravation I have, I humbly trust, been free, as far as acts of my free will and intention are concerned; even to the author of that work I pleaded with flowing tears, and with an agony of forewarning. He utterly denied it, but I fear that I had then even to *deter* perhaps not to forewarn.” Gillman’s “*Life of Coleridge*,” vol. i., pp. 247, 248, 250.

As further illustrative of this point at issue between Coleridge and De Quincey, we give here a passage bearing upon it, inserted at the opening of the new edition of the *Confessions*.] Coleridge was doubly in error when he allowed himself to aim most unfriendly blows at my supposed voluptuousness in the use of opium; in error as to a principle, and in error as to a fact. A letter of his, which I will hope that he did not design to have published, but which, however, *has* been published, points the attention of his correspondent to a broad dis

unction separating my case as an opium-eater from his own; he, it seems, had fallen excusably (because unavoidably) into this habit of eating opium — as the one sole therapeutic resource available against his particular malady; but I, wretch that I am, being so notoriously charmed by fairies against pain, must have resorted to opium in the abominable character of an adventurous voluptuary, angling in all streams for variety of pleasures. Coleridge is wrong to the whole extent of what was possible; wrong in his fact, wrong in his doctrine — in his little fact, and his big doctrine. I did not do the thing which he charges upon me; and if I *had* done it, this would not convict me as a citizen of Sybaris or Daphne. There never was a distinction more groundless and visionary than that which it has pleased him to draw between my motives and his own; nor could Coleridge have possibly owed this mis-statement to any false information; since no man, surely, on a question of my own private experience, could have pretended to be better informed than myself. Or, if there really is such a person, perhaps he will not think it too much trouble to re-write these Confessions from first to last, correcting their innumerable faults; and, as it happens that some parts of the unpublished sections for the present are missing, would he kindly restore them — brightening the colors that may have faded, rekindling the inspiration that may have drooped; filling up all those chasms, which else are likely to remain as permanent disfigurements of my little work? Meantime the reader, who takes any interest in such a question, will find that I myself (upon such a theme not simply the best, but surely the sole authority) have, without a shadow of variation, always given a different account of the matter. Most truly I have told the reader, that not any search after pleasure, but mere extremity of pain from rheumatic toothache — this and nothing else it was that first drove me into the use of opium. Coleridge's bodily affliction was simple rheumatism. Mine, which intermittingly raged for ten years, was rheumatism in the face combined with toothache. This I had inherited from my father; or inherited (I should rather say) from my own desperate ignorance; since a trifling dose of colocynth, or of any similar medicine, taken three times a week, would more certainly than opium have delivered me from that terrific curse.\* In this ignorance, however,

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\*“ *That terrific curse:*” — Two things blunt the general sense of horror which would else connect itself with toothache — viz., first, its enormous diffusion; hardly a household in Europe being clear of it, each in turn having some one chamber intermittingly echoing the groans extorted by this cruel torture. There — viz., in its ubiquity — lies one cause of its slight val

which misled me into making war upon toothache when ripened and manifesting itself in effects of pain, rather than upon its germs and gathering causes, I did but follow the rest of the world. To intercept the evil whilst yet in elementary stages of formation, was the true policy: whereas I in my blindness sought only for some mitigation to the evil when already formed, and past all reach of interception. In this stage of the suffering, formed and perfect, I was thrown passively upon chance advice, and therefore, by a natural consequence, upon opium — that being the one sole anodyne that is almost notoriously such, and which in that great function is universally appreciated.

Coleridge, therefore, and myself, as regards our baptismal initiation into the use of that mighty drug, occupy the very same position. We are embarked in the self-same boat; nor is it within the compass even of angelic hair-splitting, to show that the dark shadow thrown by our several trespasses in this field, mine and his, had by so much as a pin's point any assignable difference. Trespass against trespass (if any trespass there were) — shadow against shadow (if any shadow were really thrown by this trespass over the snowy disk of pure ascetic morality), in any case, that act in either of us would read into the same meaning, would count up as a debt into the same value, would measure as a delinquency into the same burden of responsibility. And vainly, indeed, does Coleridge attempt to differentiate two cases which ran into absolute identity, differing only as rheumatism differs from toothache. Amongst the admirers of Coleridge, I at all times stood in the foremost rank; and the more was my astonishment at being summoned so often to witness his carelessness in the manage-

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uation. A second cause is found in its immunity from danger. This latter ground of undervaluation is noticed in a saying ascribed (but on what authority I know not) to Sir Philip Sidney — viz., that supposing toothache liable in ever so small a proportion of its cases to a fatal issue, it would be generally ranked as the most dreadful amongst human maladies; whereas the certainty that it will in no extremity lead to death, and the knowledge that in the very midst of its storms sullen changes may be looked for, bringing long halcyon calms, have an unfair effect in lowering the appreciation of this malady considered as a trial of fortitude and patience. No stronger expression of its intensity and scorching fierceness can be imagined than this fact — that, within my private knowledge, two persons who had suffered alike under toothache and cancer, have pronounced the former to be, on the scale of torture, by many degrees the worse. In both, there are *at times* what surgeons call 'lancinating' pangs — keen, glancing, arrowy radiations of anguish; and upon these the basis of comparison was rested — paroxysm against paroxysm — with the result that I have stated.



ment of controversial questions, and his demoniac inaccuracy in the statement of facts. The more also was my sense of Coleridge's wanton injustice in relation to myself individually. Coleridge's gross mis-statement of facts, in regard to our several opium experiences, had its origin, sometimes in flighty reading, sometimes in partial and incoherent reading, sometimes in subsequent forgetfulness: and any one of these lax habits (it will occur to the reader) is a venial infirmity. Certainly it is; but surely *not* venial, when it is allowed to operate disadvantageously upon the character for self-control of a brother, who had never spoken of *him* but in the spirit of enthusiastic admiration; of that admiration which his exquisite works so amply challenge. Imagine the case that I really *had* done something wrong, still it would have been ungenerous — me it would have saddened, I confess, to see Coleridge rushing forward with a public denunciation of my fault: "Know all men by these presents, that I, S. T. C., a *noticeable man with large gray eyes*,\* am a licensed opium-eater, whereas this other man is a buccaneer, a pirate, a flibustier,† and can have none but a forged license in his disreputable pocket. In the name of Virtue arrest him!" But the truth is, that inaccuracy as to facts and citations from books was in Coleridge a mere necessity of nature. Not three days ago, in reading a short comment of the late Archdeacon Hare ("Guesses at Truth") upon a bold speculation of Coleridge's (utterly baseless) with respect to the machinery of Etonian Latin verses, I found my old feelings upon this subject refreshed by an instance that is irresistibly comic, since everything that Coleridge had relied upon as a citation from a book in support of his own hypothesis, turns out to be a pure fabrication of his own dreams; though, doubtless (which indeed it is that constitutes the characteristic interest of the case), without a suspicion on his part of his own furious romancing. The archdeacon's good-natured smile upon that Etonian case naturally reminded me of the case now before us, with regard to the history of our separate careers as opium-eaters. Upon which case I need say no more, as by this time the reader is aware that Coleridge's

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\* See Wordsworth's exquisite picture of S. T. C. and himself as occasional denizens in the "Castle of Indolence."

† This word — in common use, and so spelled as I spell it, amongst the grand old French and English buccaneers contemporary with our own admirable Dampier, at the close of the seventeenth century — has recently been revived in the journals of the United States, with a view to the special case of Cuba, but (for what reason I know not) is now written always as *flibustiers*. Meantime, written in whatsoever way, it is understood to be a Franco-Spanish corruption of the English word *freebooter*.

entire statement upon that subject is perfect moonshine, and, like the sculptured imagery of the pendulous lamp in "Christabel,"

"All carved from the carver's brain."

This case, therefore, might now be counted on as disposed of; and what sport it could yield might reasonably be thought exhausted. Meantime, on consideration, another and much deeper oversight of Coleridge's becomes apparent; and as this connects itself with an aspect of the case that furnishes the foundation to the whole of these ensuing Confessions, it cannot altogether be neglected. Any attentive reader, after a few moments' reflection, will perceive that, whatever may have been the casual *occasion* of mine or Coleridge's opium-eating, this could not have been the permanent *ground* of opium-eating; because neither rheumatism nor toothache is any *abiding* affection of the system. Both are intermittent maladies, and not at all capable of accounting for a *permanent* habit of opium-eating. Some months are requisite to found *that*. Making allowance for constitutional differences, I should say that *in less than 120 days* no habit of opium-eating could be formed strong enough to call for any extraordinary self-conquest in renouncing it, and even suddenly renouncing it. On Saturday you are an opium-eater, on Sunday no longer such. What then was it, after all, that made Coleridge a slave to opium, and a slave that could not break his chain? He fancies, in his headlong carelessness, that he has accounted for this habit and this slavery; and in the meantime he has accounted for nothing at all about which any question has arisen. Rheumatism, he says, drove him to opium. Very well; but with proper medical treatment the rheumatism would soon have ceased; or even without medical treatment, under the ordinary oscillations of natural causes. And when the pain ceased, then the opium should have ceased. Why did it not? Because Coleridge had come to taste the genial pleasure of opium; and thus the very impeachment, which he fancied himself in some mysterious way to have evaded, recoils upon him in undiminished force. The rheumatic attack would have retired before the habit could have had time to form itself. Or suppose that I underrate the strength of the possible habit — this tells equally in *my* favor; and Coleridge was not entitled to forget in *my* case a plea remembered in his own. It is really memorable in the annals of human self-deceptions, that Coleridge could have held such language in the face of such facts. I, boasting not at all of my self-conquests, and owning no moral argument against the free use of opium, nevertheless on mere *prudential* motives break through the vassalage more than once, and by efforts which I have recorded as

modes of transcendent suffering. Coleridge, professing to believe (without reason assigned) that opium-eating is criminal, and in some mysterious sense more criminal than wine-drinking or porter-drinking, having, therefore, the strongest *moral* motive for abstaining from it, yet suffers himself to fall into a captivity to this same wicked opium, deadlier than was ever heard of, and under no coercion whatever that he has anywhere explained to us. A slave he was to this potent drug not less abject than Caliban to Prospero — his detested and yet despotic master. Like Caliban, he frets his very heart-strings against the rivets of his chain. Still, at intervals through the gloomy vigils of his prison, you hear muttered growls of impotent mutineering swelling upon the breeze : —

“*Trasque leonum  
Vincla recusantum*” —

*recusantum*, it is true, still refusing yet still accepting, protesting forever against the fierce, overmastering curb-chain, yet forever submitting to receive it into the mouth. It is notorious that in Bristol (to that I can speak myself, but probably in many other places) he went so far as to hire men — porters, hackney-coachmen, and others — to oppose by force his entrance into any druggist’s shop. But, as the authority for stopping him was derived simply from himself, naturally these poor men found themselves in a metaphysical fix, not provided for even by Thomas Aquinas or by the prince of Jesuital casuists. And in this excruciating dilemma would occur such scenes as the following : —

“Oh, sir,” would plead the suppliant porter — suppliant, yet semi-imperative (for equally if he *did*, and if he did *not*, show tight, the poor man’s daily 5s. seemed endangered) — “really you must not; consider, sir, your wife and —”

*Transcendental Philosopher.* “Wife! what wife? I have no wife.”\*

*Porter.* “But, really now, you must not, sir. Did n’t you say no longer ago than yesterday —”

*Transcend. Philos.* “Pooh, pooh! yesterday is a long time ago. Are you aware, my man, that people are known to have dropped down dead for timely want of opium?”

*Porter.* “Ay, but you tell’t me not to hearken —”

*Transcend. Philos.* “Oh, nonsense! An emergency, a shocking emergency, has arisen — quite unlooked for. No matter what I told

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\* *Vide* “Othello.”

you in times long past. That which I *now* tell you is — that, if you don't remove that arm of yours from the doorway of this most respectable druggist I shall have a good ground of action against you for assault and battery."

Am I the man to reproach Coleridge with this vassalage to opium? Heaven forbid! Having groaned myself under that yoke, I pity, and blame him not. But undeniably, such a vassalage must have been created wilfully and consciously by his own craving after genial stimulation; a thing which I do not blame, but Coleridge *did*. For my own part, duly as the torment relaxed in relief of which I had resorted to opium, I laid aside the opium, not under any meritorious effort of self-conquest; nothing of that sort do I pretend to; but simply on a prudential instinct warning me not to trifle with an engine so awful of consolation and support, nor to waste upon a momentary uneasiness what might eventually prove, in the midst of all-shattering hurricanes, the great elixir of resurrection. What was it that did in reality make me an opium-eater? That affection which finally drove me into the *habitual* use of opium, what was it? Pain was it? No, but misery. Casual overcasting of sunshine was it? No, but blank desolation. Gloom was it that might have departed? No, but settled and abiding darkness —

" Total eclipse,  
Without all hope of day!"\*

Yet whence derived? Caused by what? Caused, as I might truly plead, by youthful distresses in London; were it not that these distresses were due, in their ultimate origin, to my own unpardonable folly; and to that folly I trace many ruins. Oh, spirit of merciful interpretation, angel of forgiveness to youth and its aberrations, that hearkenest forever as if to some sweet choir of far-off female intercessions! will ye, choir that intercede — wilt thou, angel that forgivest — join together, and charm away that mighty phantom, born amidst the gathering mists of remorse, which strides after me in pursuit from forgotten days — towering forever into proportions more and more colossal, overhanging and overshadowing my head as if close behind, yet dating its nativity from hours that are fled by more than half a century? Oh, heavens! that it should be possible for a child not seven years old, by a momentary blindness, by listening to a false, false whisper from his own bewildered heart, by one erring step, by a motion this way or that, to change the currents of his destiny, to poison

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\* Samson Agonistes."

the fountains of his peace, and in the twinkling of an eye to lay the foundations of a life-long repentance! Yet, alas! I must abide by the realities of the case. And one thing is clear, that amidst such bitter self-reproaches as are now extorted from me by the anguish of my recollections, it cannot be with any purpose of weaving plausible excuses or of evading blame, that I trace the origin of my confirmed opium-eating to a necessity growing out of my early sufferings in the streets of London. Because, though true it is that the re-agency of these London sufferings did in after years *enforce* the use of opium, equally it is true that the sufferings themselves grew out of my own folly. What really calls for excuse, is not the recourse to opium, when opium had become the one sole remedy available for the malady, but those follies which had themselves produced that malady.

I, for my part, after I had become a regular opium-eater, and from mismanagement had fallen into miserable excesses in the use of opium, did nevertheless, four several times, contend successfully against the dominion of this drug; did four several times renounce it; renounced it for long intervals; and finally resumed it upon the warrant of my enlightened and deliberate judgment, as being of two evils by very much the least. In this I acknowledge nothing that calls for excuse. I repeat again and again, that not the application of the opium, with its deep tranquillizing powers, to the mitigation of evils, bequeathed by my London hardships, is what reasonably calls for sorrow, but that extravagance of childish folly which precipitated me into scenes naturally producing such hardships.

[In the latest edition of his works De Quincey adds this note also, respecting Coleridge's personal appearance:—]

“From some misconception at the press, the account of Coleridge's personal appearance, in the paper entitled ‘Coleridge and Opium Eating,’ was printed off whilst yet imperfect, and, in fact, wanting its more interesting half. It had been suggested to me, as a proper off-set to a very inaccurate report characterizing Coleridge's person and conversation, by an American traveller, who had, however, the excuse that his visit was a very hasty one, and that Coleridge had then become corpulent and heavy—wearing some indications that already (though according to my present remembrance, not much more than forty-eight at the time) he had entered within the shadows of premature old age. The authorities for my counter-report are—1. A Bristol lady who, with her sisters, had become successors in a young ladies' boarding-school to the celebrated Hannah More; 2. Wordsworth, in his supplementary stanzas to the ‘Castle of Indolence;’ 3. Two (if not three) artists. These shall be first called into court, as

deposing to Coleridge's figure, *i. e.*, to the permanent *base* in the description — all the rest being fugitive accompaniments. One of these artists, who is now no longer such, took down, in the year 1810, at Allan Bank, Grasmere, the exact measurements of both Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth (at that time the host of Coleridge and myself). His memorandum on that occasion is missing. But as he found the two poets agreeing in height to a hair's-breadth, which I myself, as an attentive bystander, can vouch for, it will be sufficient for me to refer the curious reader to the Autobiography of Haydon, in whose *studio* Wordsworth was measured with technical nicety on a day regularly dated. The report is — 5 feet 10 inches, within a trifling fraction; and the same report, therefore, stands good to a nicety for Coleridge. Next, for the face and bearing of Coleridge at the time referred to by the lady (1796), an ample authority is found in Wordsworth's fine stanzas — 'Ah! piteous sight it was' [I cannot recall the two or three words of filling up] 'when he,'

“ ‘ This man, came back to us a wither'd flow'r.’

*That* was perhaps in 1807, when he returned from Malta, where it was that, from solitude too intense, he first took opium in excess. But in 1796, whilst yet apparently unacquainted with opium,

“ Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy —  
Tossing his limbs about him in delight.

Happiest and most genial he then was of all that taste the morning breezes of life. From Wordsworth we learn (what afterwards my own experience verified) that his eyes were large, and in color were gray: —

“ ‘ Profound his forehead was, but not severe;

And some did think' [viz., in the *Castle of Indolence*] 'that he had little business there.'

“ The lady, as *her* little contribution to this *pic-nic* portrait, insisted on his beautiful black hair, which lay in masses of natural curls half way down his back. Among all his foibles, however, it ought to be mentioned that vanity connected with personal advantages was never one: he had been thoroughly laughed out of *that* by his long experience of life at a great public school. But that which he himself utterly ignored female eyes bore witness to; and the lady of Bristol assured me that in the entire course of her life she had not seen a young man so engaging by *his* exterior. He was then a very resurrection of the old knight's son in Chaucer, of him that had joustet with infidels,

“ ‘ And ridden in Bêlmärle.’ ”

“ I should add that, whereas throughout his thirty-five years of opium he was rather corpulent, not at any period *emaciated*, as those who write romances about opium fancy to be its effect, — in 1796, when he had nearly accomplished his twenty-sixth year, he was slender in the degree most approved by ladies.

“ Such was Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1796. Ask for him ten years later, and the vision had melted into air.”

NOTE 60. Page 517.

Lady Madeline Gordon.

NOTE 61. Page 517.

‘ *The same thing* : ’ — Thus, in the calendar of the Church Festivals, the discovery of the true cross (by Helen, the mother of Constantine) is recorded (and one might think — with the express consciousness of sarcasm) as the *Invention* of the Cross.

NOTE 62. Page 517.

‘ *Fast distances* : ’ — One case was familiar to mail-coach travellers, where two mails in opposite directions, north and south, starting at the same minute from points six hundred miles apart, met almost constantly at a particular bridge which bisected the total distance.

NOTE 63. Page 521.

*De non apparentibus, &c.*

NOTE 64. Page 521.

*Snobs,* and its antithesis, ‘ *nobs,* ’ arose among the internal factions of shoemakers perhaps ten years later. Possibly enough the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known, picturesquely and effectively, by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention.

NOTE 65. Page 526.

‘ *Von Troil’s Iceland* : ’ — The allusion to a well-known chapter in Von Troil’s work, entitled, ‘ Concerning the Snakes of



Iceland.' The entire chapter consists of these six words — '*There are no snakes in Iceland.*'

NOTE 66. Page 526.

'*Forbidden seat:*' — The very sternest code of rules was enforced upon the mails by the Post-office. Throughout England, only three outsides were allowed, of whom one was to sit on the box, and the other two immediately behind the box; none, under any pretext, to come near the guard; an indispensable caution since else, under the guise of passenger, a robber might by any one of a thousand advantages — which sometimes are created, but always are favored, by the animation of frank, social intercourse — have disarmed the guard. Beyond the Scottish border, the regulation was so far relaxed as to allow of *four* outsides, but not relaxed at all as to the mode of placing them. One, as before, was seated on the box, and the other three on the front of the roof, with a determinate and ample separation from the little insulated chair of the guard. This relaxation was conceded by way of compensating to Scotland her disadvantages in point of population. England, by the superior density of her population, might always count upon a large fund of profits in the fractional trips of chance passengers riding for short distances of two or three stages. In Scotland, this chance counted for much less. And therefore, to make good the deficiency, Scotland was allowed a compensatory profit upon one *extra* passenger.

NOTE 67. Page 528.

'*False echoes:*' — Yes, false! for the words ascribed to Napoleon, as breathed to the memory of Desaix, never were uttered at all! They stand in the same category of theatrical fictions as the cry of the foundering line-of-battle ship *Vengeur*, as the vaunt of General Cambronne at Waterloo, '*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas,*' or as the repartees of Talleyrand.

NOTE 68. Page 534.

'*Wore the royal livery:*' — The general impression was, that the royal livery belonged of right to the mail-coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official war-

rant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post-office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service.

NOTE 69. Page 536.

‘*Turrets* :’ — As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterization, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torrettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen, to whose confidential friendship I had the honor of being admitted in my younger days.

NOTE 70. Page 537.

‘*Mr. Waterton* :’ — Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile, that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire, than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him.

NOTE 71. Page 538.

‘*Households* :’ — Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and children; which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less characteristically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life.

## NOTE 72. Page 540.

‘*Audacity*:’ — Such the French accounted it; and it has struck me that Soult would not have been so popular in London at the period of her present Majesty’s coronation, or in Manchester, on occasion of his visit to that town, if they had been aware of the insouciance with which he spoke of us in notes written at intervals from the field of Waterloo. As though it had been mere felony in our army to look a French one in the face, he said in more notes than one, dated from two to four P. M., on the field of Waterloo, ‘Here are the English — we have them; they are caught *en flagrant delit*.’ Yet no man should have known us better; no man had drunk deeper from the cup of humiliation than Soult had in 1809, when ejected by us with headlong violence from Oporto, and pursued through a long line of wrecks to the frontier of Spain; subsequently at Albuera, in the bloodiest of recorded battles, to say nothing of Toulouse, he should have learned our pretensions.

## NOTE 73. Page 540.

‘*At that time*:’ — I speak of the era previous to Waterloo.

## NOTE 74. Page 542.

‘*Three hundred*:’ — Of necessity, this scale of measurement, to an American, if he happens to be a thoughtless man, must sound ludicrous. Accordingly, I remember a case in which an American writer indulges himself in the luxury of a little fibbing, by ascribing to an Englishman a pompous account of the Thames, constructed entirely upon American ideas of grandeur, and concluding in something like these terms: — ‘And, sir, arriving at London, this mighty father of rivers attains a breadth of at least two furlongs, having, in its winding course, traversed the astonishing distance of one hundred and seventy miles.’ And this the candid American thinks it fair to contrast with the scale of the Mississippi. Now, it is hardly worth while to answer a pure fiction gravely, else one might say that no Englishman out of Bedlam ever thought of looking in an island for the rivers of a continent; nor, consequently could have thought of looking for the peculiar grandeur of the Thames in the length of its course.

or in the extent of soil which it drains; yet, if he *had* been so absurd, the American might have recollected that a river, not to be compared with the Thames even as to volume of water — viz., the Tiber — has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however corpulent, of his own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which, though far from the largest, it is the most influential stream. Upon some such scale, and not by a transfer of Columbian standards, is the course of our English mails to be valued. The American may fancy the effect of his own valuations to our English ears, by supposing the case of a Siberian glorifying his country in these terms: — ‘These wretches, sir, in France and England, cannot march half a mile in any direction without finding a house where food can be had and lodging; whereas, such is the noble desolation of our magnificent country, that in many a direction for a thousand miles, I will engage that a dog shall not find shelter from a snow-storm, nor a wren find an apology for breakfast.’

NOTE 75. Page 546.

‘*Glittering laurels:*’ — I must observe, that the color of *green* suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights.

NOTE 76. Page 559.

‘*Confluent:*’ — Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter): Lancaster is at the foot of this letter; Liverpool at the top of the *right* branch; Manchester at the top of the *left*; proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches; it is twenty-two miles along the stem — viz., from Preston in the middle, to Lancaster at the root. There’s a lesson in geography for the reader

NOTE 77. Page 560.

‘*Twice in the year:*’ — There were at that time only two *assizes* even in the most populous counties — viz., the Lent Assizes, and the Summer Assizes.

## NOTE 78. Page 561.

'*Sigh-born*:'—I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in '*Giraldus Cambricensis*'—viz., *suspiciosæ cogitationes*.

## NOTE 79. Page 564.

It is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides.

## NOTE 80. Page 564.

'*Quartering*:'—This is the technical word, and, I presume, derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

## NOTE 81. Page 572.

'*Averted signs*:'—I read the course and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but it must be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

## NOTE 82. Page 573.

'*Campo Santo*:'—It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the Campo Santo (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem for a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses might run; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I had seen passengers walk and burdens carried, about two centuries back they were through the middle of St Paul's in London, may have assisted my dream.





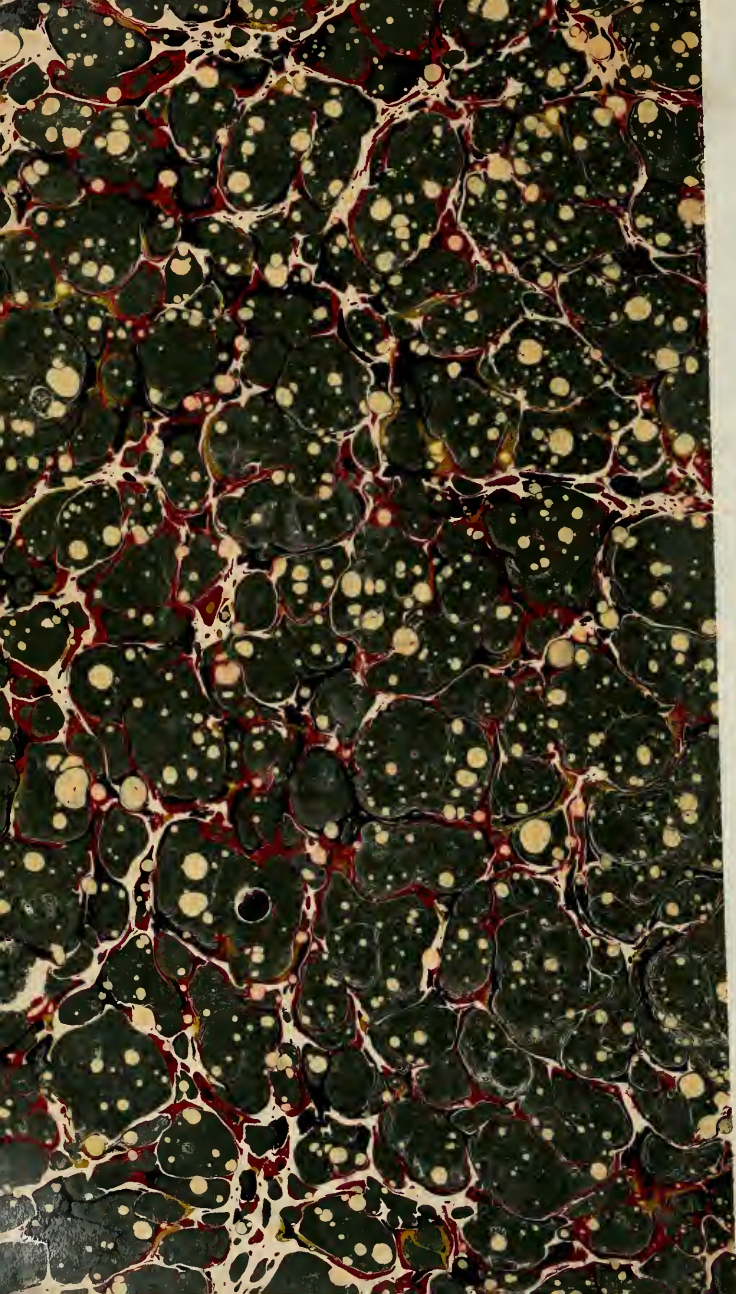












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